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& Bystander



NOVEMBER 9
1956

CHRISTMAS NUMBER

THREE SHILLINGS
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Biscuit Manufacturers
McVitie & Price Ltd.

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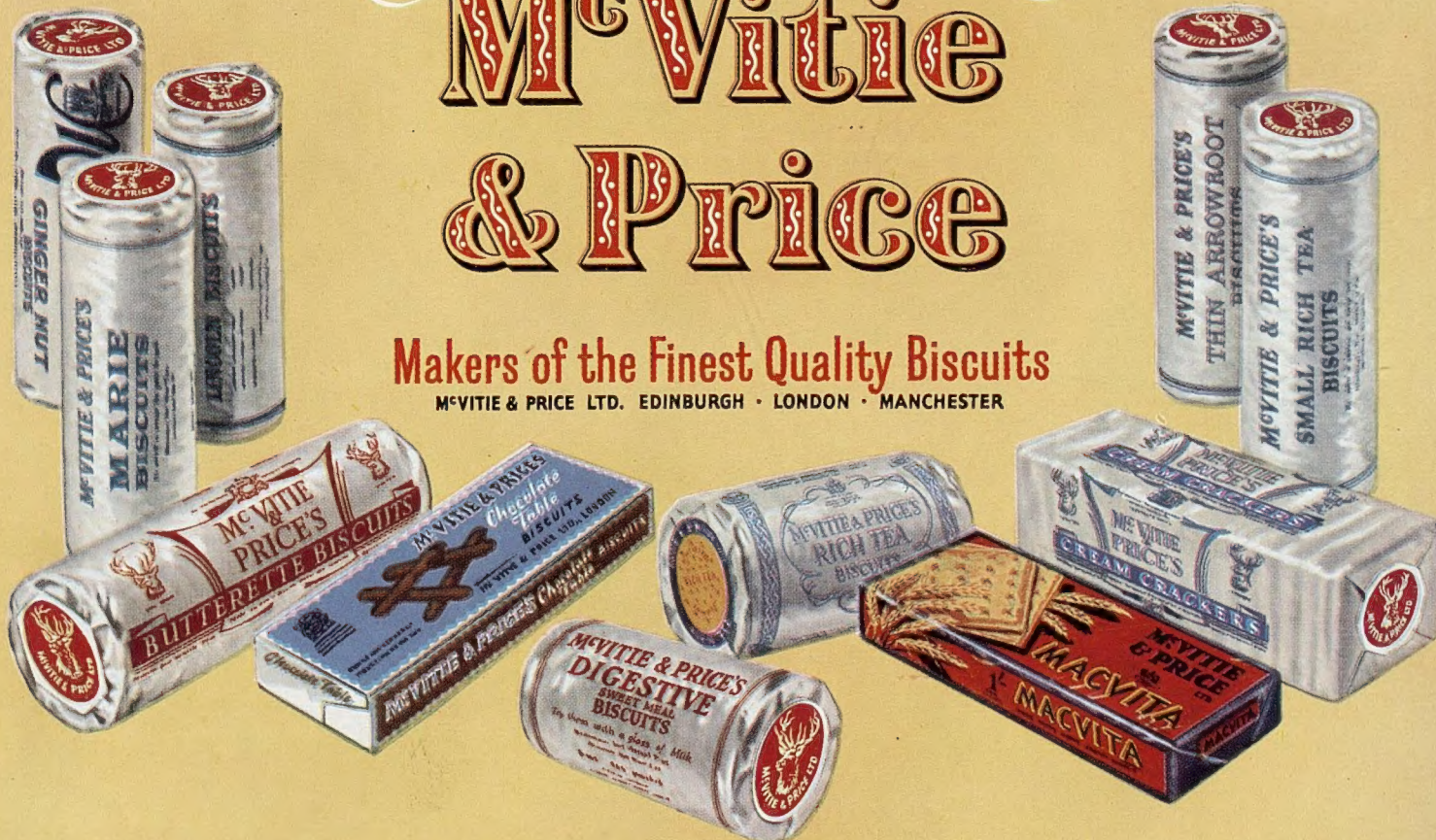
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No Christmas is complete without it. Gordon's Gin has a most favourable influence on tonic water, fruit squash, vermouth.



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Gordon's Stands Supreme

HAVE THE GAY GORDONS FOR CHRISTMAS

HAVE THE GAY GORDONS FOR CHRISTMAS

THE GAY GORDONS FOR CHRISTMAS

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THIS XMAS!

525/259 "Princess" Compact with multi-coloured jewel design on various colour grounds from 33/6

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THE MOST TREASURED NAME IN PERFUME

CHANEL

Ask for
GRANT'S
-do you?



Welcome Always —
Keep it Handy

QUEEN'S SPORTSMAN'S Sweet dry

GRANT'S

MORELLA
CHERRY BRANDY

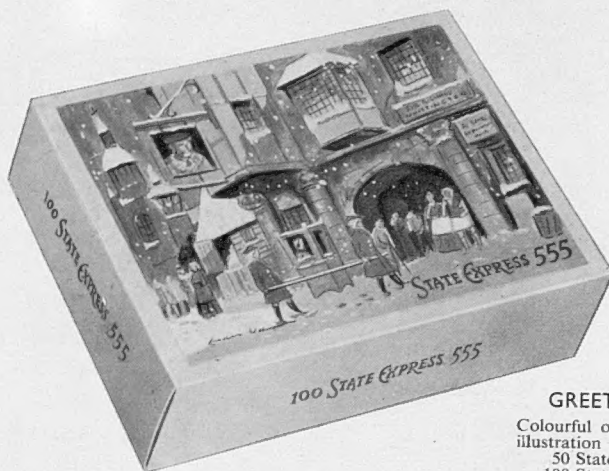


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ENGLISH PEWTER TANKARDS

Made in Sheffield in hammered finish, with the traditional glass base, and containing an airtight tin of 50 State Express 555 cigarettes
 1/2 Pint Tankard, 30/-
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What a pleasure to receive any of these handsome presents—each one a most welcome token of the festive spirit of Christmas. Your gift will always be appreciated when it's State Express 555—the best cigarettes in the world.



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Colourful outers with a picturesque illustration of seasonable character.
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Q7

Have a gimlet.
 Thanks very much...
 a whatlet?
 A gimlet.
 SEAGERS gin,
 lime juice,
 small iceberg.
 Sounds promising.
 Is it a gimlet if
 the gin isn't SEAGERS?
 I daresay, legally, but—
 Ah! I know. You're
 going to tell me SEAGERS
 is some special kind of gin.
 Let's put it more cautiously
 and say that gin is merely
 a kind of SEAGERS.

*Seager Evans & Co. Limited,
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Indiscret



Un cadeau
 toujours
 de bon goût
 en flacon
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Cocktail Virginia

Here is originality without the flaw of mere novelty—two delightful brands of Sobranie cigarettes, each in its own field without a superior, dressed as no other cigarettes are dressed... Here are all those rare qualities for so long implied in the Sobranie tradition, presented with an éclat which is excitingly up to date.

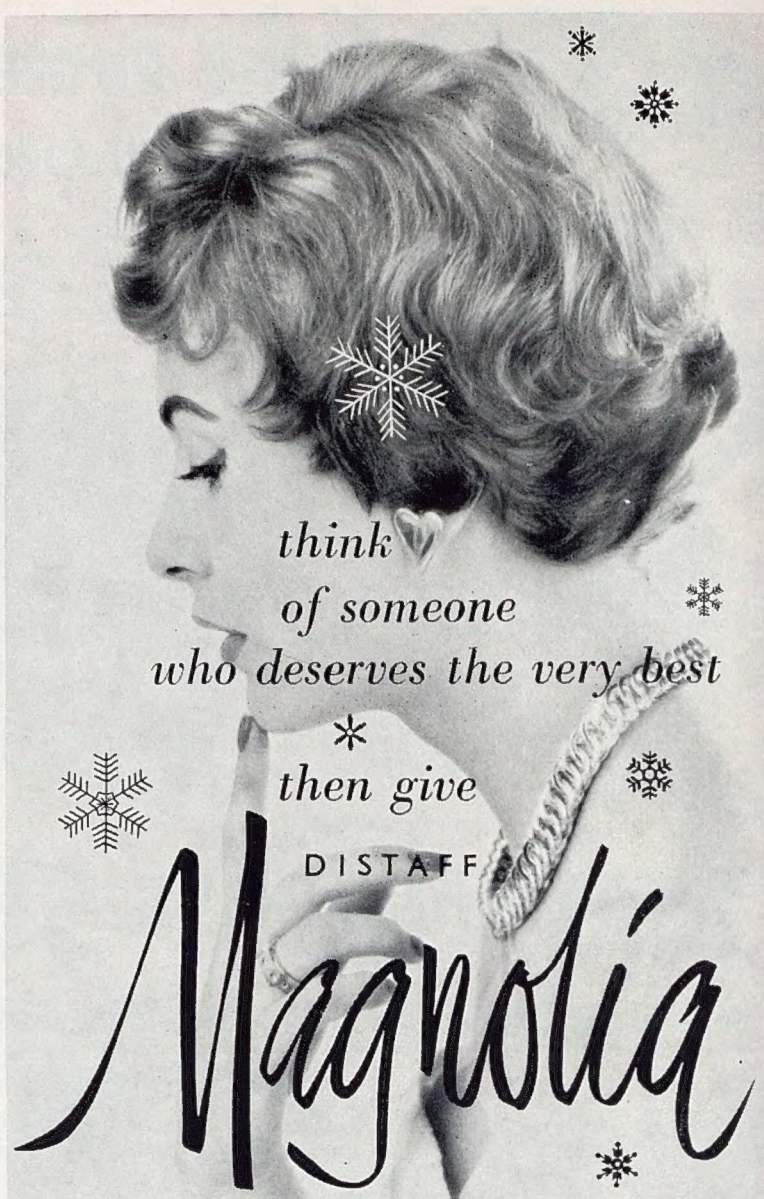
The gay Cocktail Virginia are wrapped in 5 different coloured papers, all gold-tipped, and presented in a hand-made box. The Black Russian, originally made especially for a Russian Grand Duke at the Court of St. Petersburg, are wrapped in mysterious black, gold tipped and crested... Both Cocktail Sobranie and Sobranie Black Russian cigarettes are made specially to delight the smartest of modern hostesses and the choosiest of choosy guests.

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Black Russian



*think
of someone
who deserves the very best*

then give

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Magnolia

SHEETS AND PILLOW CASES

These are no ordinary cotton sheets. They're made from an entirely new type of cotton specially developed and grown on our own plantations in Mississippi—largest and finest in the world. This new cotton makes Magnolia sheets stronger than anything of the kind before. What is more, they are quality controlled through every stage of manufacture from cotton seed to shop counter, and FULLY GUARANTEED.

Exact dimensions
70" x 108", 80" x 108" and
90" x 108" with a new
cordstitched style.
Pillow cases to match.



FROM LEADING DRAPERS AND STORES

Magnolia Sheets and Pillow Cases are produced from cotton seed to shop counter by DISTAFF FABRICS LTD · BOLTON · LANCs
(A Subsidiary of Fine Spinners & Doublers Ltd)





"I'm running the whole party home in my new Austin"

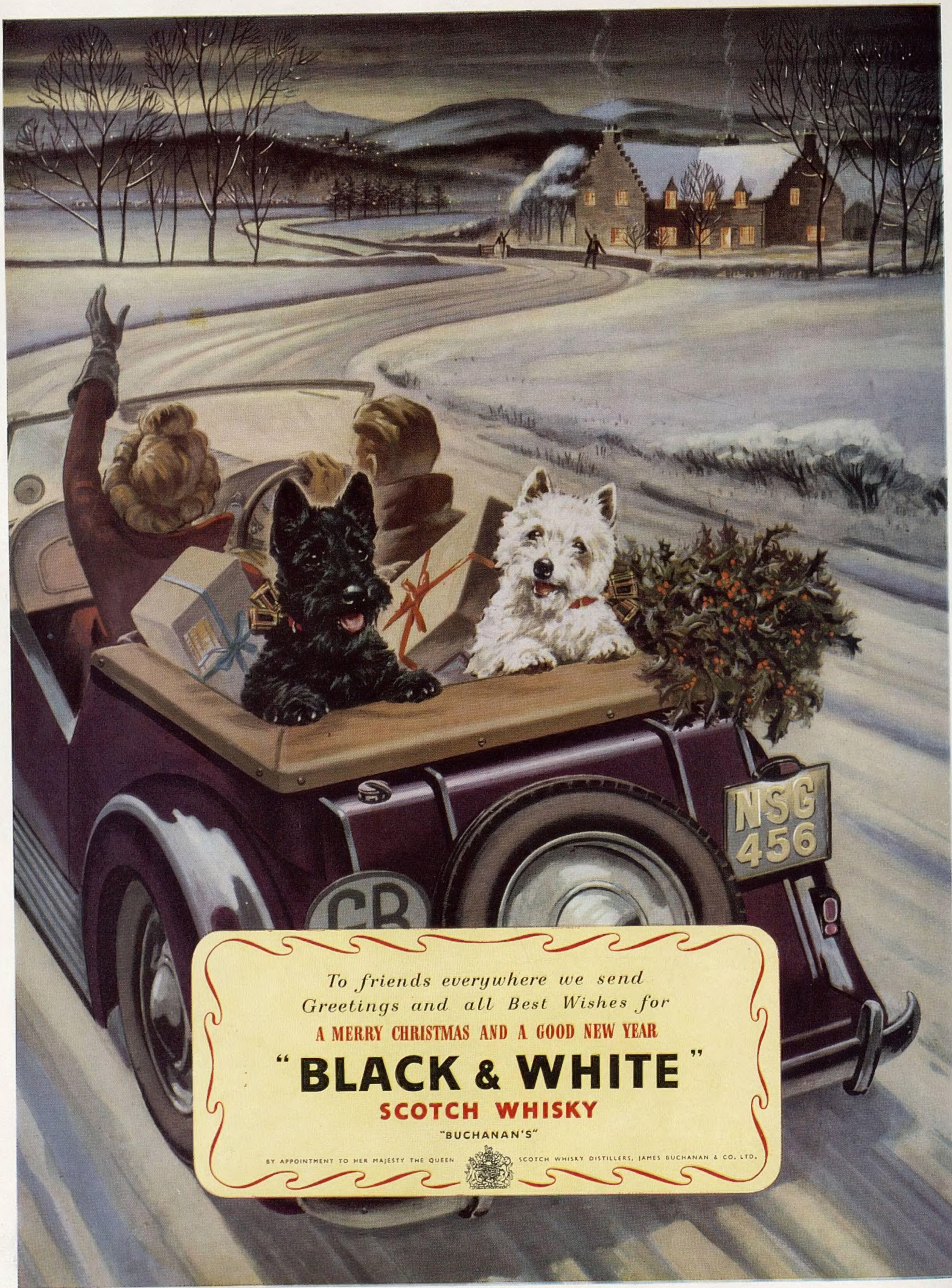


Buy **AUSTIN**
and be proud of it

Even Michael's father wondered whether they would get *all* the guests home in one go. But Michael knew his Austin. Why, only yesterday he shared the back of the car with a Christmas tree, a bran tub, two small brothers, and one large turkey! It's all in a day's work for this family car at a family time like Christmas. In fact the Austin has been on the go morning, noon, and night: to shops, parties, circus, ice-rink, everywhere. Yet, as Michael points out, with all the starting and stopping his Austin still logs thirty miles to the gallon. And what with four gears it fairly weaves through the Christmas traffic. It starts first time from cold and never gives trouble because it's as dependable as only an Austin can be.



THE AUSTIN MOTOR COMPANY LIMITED, LONGBRIDGE, BIRMINGHAM



To friends everywhere we send
Greetings and all Best Wishes for
A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A GOOD NEW YEAR

"BLACK & WHITE"
SCOTCH WHISKY

"BUCHANAN'S"

BY APPOINTMENT TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



SCOTCH WHISKY DISTILLERS, JAMES BUCHANAN & CO. LTD.



reetings

to
all **M**en of **G**oodwill, to
readers of this journal from
Mayfair to **M**aryland,
Muckle **F**lugga to **C**ape
Horn. **M**ay they find in its
pages some of the warmth
and kindness of the home-
land and a reassurance
that **E**ngland is still merry
despite officialdom, still a
green and pleasant land.



Devised, with seasonable Instances, by Sydney Carter

A FOR ANIMALS: especially the ox and ass, who stand by the manger in the Christmas crib. In 1224 St. Francis of Assisi introduced a real live ox and ass into the church at Greccio. On Christmas Eve, according to an old tradition, animals go down upon their knees at midnight. Not only that—they even talk; but it's not a good idea to listen. The Bretons, for example, tell a tale about a mean old woman who used to starve her cat and dog. One Christmas Eve, she heard them talking. "It's time we lost our mistress," said the dog, "and tonight we shall. Burglars are going to break in; she'll shout, and they will hit her on the head." Horrified, she ran out of the door—straight into a burglar's arms; he knocked her on the head, and that was that.



B FOR BEFANA. Befana is a kind old crone who brings gifts for good Italian children; bad ones get birch twigs or a lump of coal. In fact, if they are really bad Befana—who is also known as the Old Woman or the Witch—may eat them up. Her visits take place at Epiphany (January 6). When the Three Wise Men were following the Star (or so the story goes) they invited the Befana to go with them, but she was too busy with the housework. Later, she changed her mind; she tried to follow, with a present, but she lost her way. She never got to Bethlehem, and every year she tries again. In Russia there is, or was, a similar old woman called Babushka.

C FOR CAROL: once a rollicking round dance but now, in nine cases out of ten, a holy hymn. The tenth and not so holy case—the sort of carol that begins: "Wassail!"—is a reminder of the fact that carolling was not always a church activity. By the end of the Middle Ages "carol" had begun to mean a song and not a dance. Carol writers still maintained a merry note, but their themes grew more religious. Carols, like Christmas itself, are always dying out. Hone, in 1822, thought that they would soon be gone. But, like Gothic architecture, carols were "revived": and most of those we sing in church are, like most of the churches, Victorian.



D FOR DEVIL: a local Christmas character at Bidarray, a small Basque town on the French side of the Franco-Spanish border. Legend says that the Devil, owing to the obstinate piety of the Basque people, had not seen a new Basque soul in Hell for years. He came in person, therefore, to find what was amiss. It was not long before he saw a pretty Basque girl begin to cross the bridge over the River Nive on her way to midnight mass; so the Devil advanced to meet her, but by the time he had crossed the bridge, he had forgotten the few Basque phrases he had learnt. Foiled, he plunged into the river.

E FOR EPIPHANY: the last of the twelve days of Christmas and the night on which, according to legend, the Wise Men from the east arrived in Bethlehem with their presents of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Tradition (not the Bible) says they were three kings and even names them: Melchior, Gaspar and Balthazar. One of them is usually depicted as a Negro. In the south of Europe, and especially in Spain, Epiphany is the time for presents. It is the Three Kings who deliver them. Spanish fathers, for example, don't dress up as Santa Claus; instead, they arrange for the Kings to call.

FOR FATHER CHRISTMAS. Like the old red squirrel, Father Christmas has been driven out by an American competitor. The red-coated Santa Claus, who came from Holland originally, got acclimatized in North America and then came back to conquer Europe. The true old English Father Christmas is dressed in green more often than in red, wears a wreath of holly round his hoary locks and sometimes a string of mince pies hanging round his neck. As likely as not, he is carrying a bowl of punch. Father Christmas thinks more of food and drink than little girls and boys, and he has never seen a reindeer in his life. His chief mood is one of narcissistic glee:

*Here comes I, old Father Christmas,
Welcome or welcome not.
I hope old Father Christmas
Will never be forgot*

—that is how he introduces himself in the Mummers' Play. (See M.) Apart from radiating jollity, he seems to have no aim in life; and it is not surprising that the Puritans, during the eleven years that they ruled England, so persecuted him that he cried out lustily in print, and was never the same again



GFOR GHOSTS: indispensable to any Christmas Number. There are two conflicting views upon this subject. The general consensus of opinion, from Iceland to the Isles of Greece, is that the nights are far from wholesome at this time of year. It is High Noon for Vampires and Werewolves in the east of Europe. Between Christmas Eve and Epiphany, Greece is plagued by goat-footed goblins known as Kallikantzaroi. Will o' the Wisps and large black dogs worry wayfarers in Guernsey. In France the Devil (see under D) is more than usually active. In Scandinavia it used to be considered prudent to put out a special meal for ghostly visitors before you left for church on Christmas Eve. Until quite lately, a mob of restless spirits roamed the northern skies, with such names as "The Wild Hunt," "The Raging Host" or "The Devil and his Dandy Dogs," led by such un-Christian characters as Odin. So it's not surprising if a headless ancestor or two are noted at this time of year in the more aristocratic English corridors. We are lucky to get nothing worse. At Christmas, says Marcellus in that celebrated passage in *Hamlet* extolling the peaceful nature of the season in blank verse, "No spirit dare stir abroad." Indeed! With all the elegance pointing to precisely the opposite. Where were you brought up, Marcellus?



H&I FOR THE HOLLY AND THE IVY. Holly is male, Ivy female; and the war between these two is the theme of many an old carol. In the Middle Ages, when the writers (ten to one) were men, Holly usually came out on top. But not in one song, for it ends:

*Then spake Holly, and set him down on his knee,
"I pray thee, gentle Ivy,
Say me no villainy,
In landes where we go."*

What is the reason for this strange collapse of Holly? Chivalry? It could be; though it is only fair to state that some words of Ivy—"I am lov'd and prov'd"—are given by some editors as "I am loud and proud." Perhaps this poet was a realist. In the eyes of the Church, Holly was the favourite. Witches, on the other hand, could not abide it. Ivy, though not so unspeakable as Mistletoe, had a faintly pagan air. Bacchus, god of wine, used to wear a crown of ivy. . . . Ivy seems to have sunk into the background as a Christmas decoration. This is a pity. Trailing down the wall, or curling round the flex of an electric light, the decorative qualities of her bold leafage are not to be despised.

J FOR JOSEPH, husband of the Virgin Mary.
*Joseph was an old man,
And an old man was he,
When he married Mary
The Queen of Galilee.*

Apart from the fact that he was old and a carpenter not much is known about this obliging saint. He is outshone by his nearest and dearest. Even Herod, villain of the Christmas piece, comes in for more of the limelight. Yet Joseph's situation is an interesting one: indeed, unique. One day a poet or dramatist tired of the more flashy saints and sinners—Mr. T. S. Eliot, perhaps?—may do him justice. Meanwhile his fellow-carpenters have adopted St. Joseph as their patron saint. J also for Joseph of Arimathea, whose Holy Thorn still blooms in Britain. When he came here as a missionary, legend says, he stuck his staff into the ground near Glastonbury. It took root and flowered every Christmas Eve, until it was cut down by a Puritan. But Holy Thorns still flower in other parts of Britain at this season of the year.



K FOR KISSING UNDER THE MISTLETOE. This seems to be a purely English custom. The traditional method (which no one bothers to observe today) is for the young man to pick off a berry for each kiss. No more berries, no more kisses. The Church always suspected mistletoe, which was used as a charm against infertility and poison long before Christianity reached Britain and, no doubt, a long while after. It is not welcomed inside most churches at the present day.

K also for Kalends: the New Year celebrations in pagan Rome. Houses were brightly lit and decked with evergreens; presents were given and quantities of food were eaten. All these practices survived, to some extent, in Christian times although some of the early Christian Fathers, e.g. Tertullian, regarded the evergreens a little sourly.

M FOR MUMMERS. The curious ritual or drama known as the Mummers' Play used to take place in many parts of England, and it still does in a few. The hero is St. George (or Sir George, or King George) who meets as antagonist the Turkish Knight (corrupted, in Gloucestershire, to "Turkey Snipe"). After boasting in doggerel they fight, and one gets killed; whereupon a doctor comes, and brings him back to life. Other characters appear and do nothing much except announce their names. "Here come I, Old Father Christmas." "Here come I, Beelzebub" or (in one case) "Here come I, a Suffragette." The Mummers' Play is meat and drink to the mythologist, who can see in it (and in nearly everything that happens at this time of year) the remnants of an old pre-Christian ritual designed to revive the dim, waning sun.

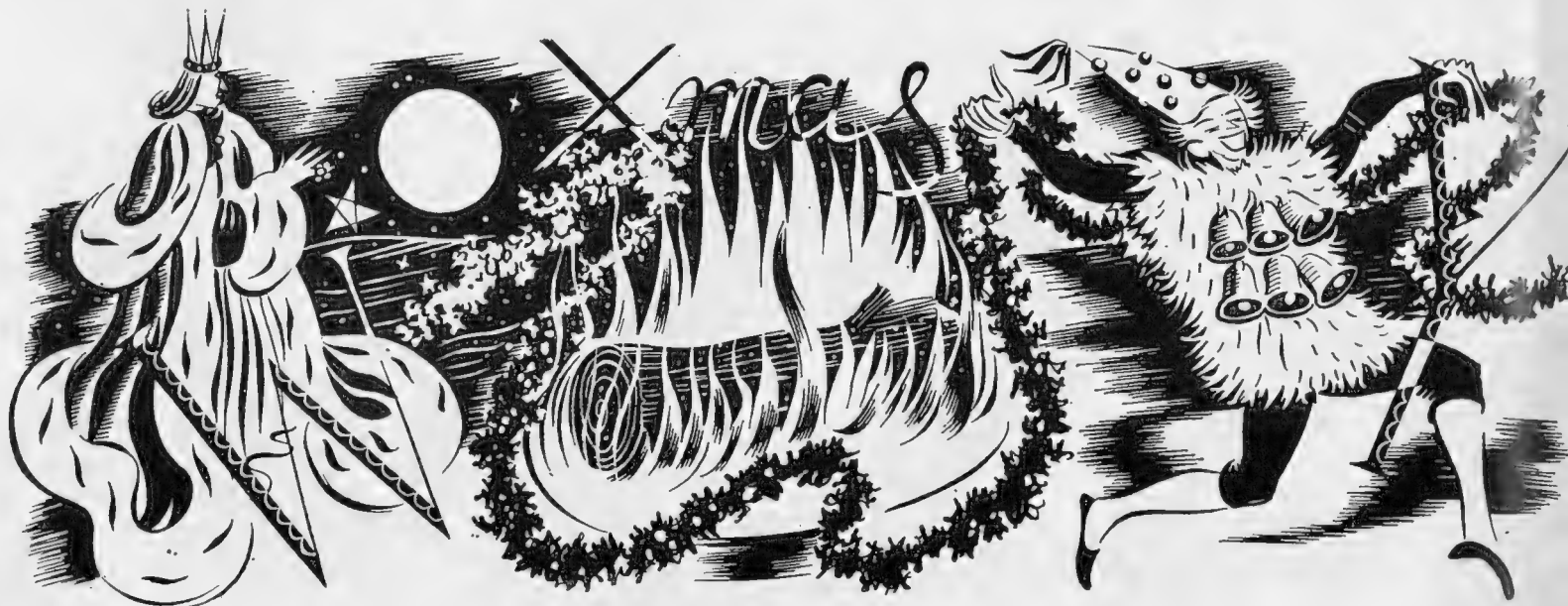


O FOR OLD CHRISTMAS DAY (January 6). To bring the English calendar in line with the one used by the rest of Europe, eleven days were dropped in 1752. Christmas now came eleven days earlier; and the Holy Thorn, instead of blossoming on Christmas Eve as had been its wont at Glastonbury, Quanton and elsewhere, now found itself blossoming on January 5. All those traditional observances which were based on the seasons rather than the calendar were thrown completely out of gear, and Somerset farmers who wassailed their apple trees with mugs of cider and a burst of gunshot on Twelfth Night continued to reckon by the Old Style calendar; with the result that they now do it (yes, a few still do) on *old* Twelfth Night, i.e. January 17. And that's not all: the accountants were just as bedevilled as the farmers, which is why . . . but what, you may ask yourself peevishly, has this to do with Christmas? Nothing, except that dividends on Consols, etc., fall due on Old Christmas Day.

L FOR LUCY. In the early hours of December 13, Swedish sleepers are awakened by a pretty girl in white, with a red sash round her middle. On her head she wears a crown of lighted candles (nine); in her hands she brings a cup of coffee. Her name is Lussi. That, at any rate, is how it used to be. Why Santa Lucia, martyred in Sicily, should be remembered in this way in Sweden is a mystery, though her name provides a clue. It comes from *lux*, meaning light. Add to this the fact that her feast day used to fall on the shortest day of the year in the Old Style calendar, and the amateur folklorist will find a connection in two ticks. "Winter magic," he will murmur, wisely. Well, maybe; and he can just as easily explain the fact that in Bohemia Lucy turns up in the form of a nanny-goat with presents for good children and you know what for the bad. In Switzerland, Lucy is the wife of Father Christmas, a tantalizing glimpse into the private life of one otherwise universally regarded as a confirmed bachelor.

N FOR ST. NICHOLAS; better known as Santa Claus. St. Nicholas was a rich bishop on the coast of Asia Minor who loved to give presents. He lived in the fourth century. He is the patron saint of pawnbrokers, scholars, parish clerks, little boys and sailors; not to mention Aberdeen and Russia. His feast day falls in December (the 6th) which is no doubt how he got mixed up with Christmas. In the Low Countries and Germany St. Nicholas became established as a Christmas present bringer long ago. In Holland he still arrives—"from Spain"—complete with red cope and mitre, on December 6. He is attended by a dusky page, "Black Peter," and rides upon a horse. He seems to have travelled with the Dutch settlers to America, where he shed his bishopric, acquired a team of reindeers, altered his name from Sinta Klaas to Santa Claus, and supplanted Father Christmas.

P FOR PURITANS, to whom the very name of Christmas was anathema. On Christmas Day, 1644, they enforced a Fast; and from 1644 to 1656 Parliament met as usual on Christmas Day, shops were ordered not to shut and decorations were torn down. **P**, too, for Pudding. The pedigree of the English Plum or Christmas Pudding is as follows: First, in the Middle Ages, there was something called Frumenty. This was made of wheat boiled until the grains had burst and then cooled off, strained and boiled up again with milk or broth or yoke of egg. You could serve it with meat. One branch of the frumenty family survived in living memory; in fact, they may still be eating it in the wilder wolds of Yorkshire. Frumenty, by now, consisted of stewed wheat, milk, raisins, spice and sugar boiled together. But another branch, and this is the one that we are interested in, changed its name and nature to Plum Porridge. This was a powerful brew of mutton, veal or beef boiled up with hock or sherry, with every kind of fruit that you could think of thrown into the pot, together with brown bread to thicken it.



Q FOR QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD, where the Boar's Head is still solemnly carried into the dining hall on Christmas Day, and a special carol sung. A wild boar's head was the traditional Christmas dish for those who could afford it in the Middle Ages; and you can still get Boar's Head from Fortnum's. But don't expect a pair of tusks; it comes to you in a pot.

Q also for Quainton, down in the depths of Buckinghamshire, where a Holy Thorn flowers on Christmas Eve; or rather did, until the calendar was altered. (See O.)

R FOR RUSSIA. Purged of Christian elements, Christmas is still celebrated in the Kremlin; ideologically, it is linked not with the birth of Christ but the New Year. That red-clad figure who appears on Greetings cards is the People's Father Frost.

S FOR SATURNALIA. This Roman celebration in memory of a long lost Golden Age took place in December (the 17th to 21st, to be exact) and showed considerable evidence of what one might call the Christmas spirit, albeit carried to extreme lengths. Social barriers were broken down; masters waited on slaves and a merry time was had by all.

T FOR TREE. The kind of Christmas Tree which we are used to came from Germany, round about the eighteen-forties. Prince Albert is usually given most of the credit, but it seems to have reached France about the same time without his aid. Some say Luther introduced it into Germany. A more traditionally English decoration is the Kissing Bough, suspended from the ceiling. This consists of a hemisphere or globe of evergreen, on a light framework of wood or wire, with lighted candles sticking up and a ring of apples hanging down; and in the midst of all this, a bunch of mistletoe.

U FOR UNLUCKY. It is unlucky to leave the decorations up beyond Twelfth Night; though, as a matter of fact, it was the custom once to leave them up a good deal longer. It is unlucky to begin any project on December 28, the day when Herod massacred the children (Holy Innocents' Day, also known as Childermass). Apart from these two minor restraints Christmas is a traditionally propitious time.

V FOR VIEJENEROS ("Old Yearers"): interesting performers in the mountains in the north of Spain who do what Popes 1,200 years ago banned as "diabolical"—namely, dance disguised as animals and women at the turning of the year. For a description of these and similar activities in Switzerland, the Pyrénées and elsewhere see Violet Alford's book *The Singing Of The Travels*.

W FOR WENCESLAS, the good king who looked out on the feast of Stephen (December 26). There really was a king called this and he lived in Bohemia. The tune is taken from an old spring carol.

X FOR XMAS. Feeble, but what can you think of that begins with X? It is a contraction many people think should be abolished by law.

Y FOR YULE: the pagan part of English Christmas. The Saxons used to celebrate this winter feast before the missionaries came, and saw no reason to leave off. They dropped the name of Odin from the invitation, that was all. They kept the eating and drinking; they kept the Yule log, too. This is a piece of firewood big enough to last right through the Christmas season. One year's Yule log should be kindled from a bit of the Yule log of the year before. An alternative to the Yule log is an enormous candle, to be lit on Christmas morning; if it fails to last the day, the family will have bad luck, so it is kept clear of draughts. Christmas is still called *Jul* in Scandinavia.

Z F O R ZORROMOCO, a kind of dancing fool with bells on to be met with in the mountains of Cantabria around Twelfth Night, if you are lucky.





Christmas Invitation for 1756

Rosanthe, while some doleful Bards commend
The lore of Churchyards as our chiefest End,
And while the howling Blast or slanting Snow
Perhaps, as they deserve, does with them go,
Believe me, in our Hamlet all is kind,
Old Oaks yet green, a Rose you yet may find,
And only Capons grieve and Turkeys some
For Christmas Day—their fatal Day—nigh come.
Beneath our Bridge the River clear delays
His Pow'r of Floods, and with bright Pebbles plays;
Good Soul, though thus he claims a beauteous Prize,
What are those Pebbles to your conqu'ring Eyes?
Our Ringers all, prepar'd to crack the Bells,
Swear, for their Mystery our home-brew'd excels,
Yet should you come to Mattins Christmas Day
Those Bells would bark a Thowsen Mile away.
My Wallnuts now are good, my Medlars too,
Sweet Pippins bushel-baskets-full for you;

For Christmas-fare, as now and then Folks like,
We too can soon drag from my Pond a Pike.
Then we'll invite the Parson even should he
Consume more Port than spend Theology:
You are a Latin Lady, this he knows,
And you'll be pleased with classick Verse and Prose.
Of such our Parson little seems to know
When fair ones pause beneath our *Mistletoe*.
Meanwhile appear, Rosanthe—hark, the Coach
Which brings you in my Mind's Ear doth approach,
And Christmas too; arriv'd you straight may sup,
Then to our downiest Bed be usher'd up,
And Juliet's Nurse, for so we call her here,
Shall watch you dreamless on your Pillow-bere,
Unless awhile you choose the Hearth downstairs
'Till into Dawn our Night of Possets wears;
Be't as it will, Rosanthe: come to say
To Flocks, Fields, Groves and Swains, It's Christmas Day.

—Edmund Blunden





By courtesy of the National Gallery

The changelessness of winter sports

THIS delightful winter scene by Avercamp (1585 to c. 1663) epitomizes the spirit of winter which does not change with time and fashion. The coldly shining ice and the stark trees are contrasted with the welcoming warm red brick of barn and homestead, and the normally staid Dutch citizens have decked themselves in their warmest and brightest clothes. Happily they skim and circle over the ice, nose and cheeks red and tingling; then home to an over-abundance of rich Christmas food



A North Country Wassail

Illustrated by
Judith Bledsoe

*Here we come a-wassailing
Among the leaves so green,
Here we come a-wandering,
So fair to be seen:*

Refrain: *Love and joy come to you:
And to you your wassail too,
And God bless you, and send you
A happy new year.*



*Our wassail cup is made
Of the rosemary tree,
And so is your beer
Of the best barley:*

*We are not daily beggars
That beg from door to door,
But we are neighbours' children
Whom you have seen before:*

*Call up the butler of this house,
Put on his golden ring;
Let him bring us up a glass of beer,
And better we shall sing:*

*We have got a little purse
Of stretching leather skin:
We want a little of your money
To line it well within:*

*Bring us out a table,
And spread it with a cloth;
Bring us out a mouldy cheese,
And some of your Christmas loaf:*

*God bless the master of this house,
Likewise the mistress too:
And all the little children
That round the table go:*

*Good Master and good Mistress,
While you're sitting by the fire,
Pray think of us poor children
Who are wandering in the mire:*





Illustrations by Ferdinand Bilan

Four Feasts of Christmas

• Eric Bennett •

In 900 the long reign of Alfred the Great was almost at an end. After 56 battles he had defeated the Danes, whose Christmas habits were similar to his own, and had confined them to the east and north of England. He had established peace in Wessex and had built up such a strong fleet and militia that within a few years his son Edward the Elder was able to conquer the Danes and become the Emperor of All Britain. The dynasty was established for nearly a century, before that well-known history book character, Ethelrede Unrede, let the Danes in



900 When the Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity, they did not abandon their potent pagan appetites. In spite of strong clerical opposition they brought their gusto for feasting Odin to the service of the Christian festivals. By the time of Alfred the Great, who decreed that the Yuletide feast should last the full twelve days of Christmas, the clergy had retired from the opposition benches and had their feet well under the dining tables.

The menu was simple. Roast and boiled mutton garnished with herbs, roast and boiled beef, chickens and geese. The beef had been killed in November, and was sun-dried and salted.

The meat was cooked in the hall and handed round by the servants on spits. Each guest cut off a chunk with his own knife and ate with his fingers. Yet some of the aristocracy actually used silver forks, which did not come into English use again until the seventeenth century.

Frumenty was the Christmas pudding. It was made from wheat grains boiled in milk, spiced and sweetened with honey.

Cheese served with oatcake was the last course. But the emphasis was strictly on meat and drink, though not necessarily in that order.

The wassail bowl was a great feature of the feast. It was filled with hot spiced ale in which sizzled roasted apples. The superior guests drank from glasses, which had to be emptied in one gulp, as they were not made to stand up. Other guests and servants drank from horns or wooden cups.

On a side table stood wooden buckets of ale, cider and mead. These were the most popular drinks, but wine, made in English vineyards, was also served. Contemporary chroniclers are curiously quiet about the quality of our native wines, and it may well be that Wessex, vintage 860 say, was a trifle dubious.

For liqueurs the Anglo-Saxons drank morat, distilled from honey and mulberries, and pigment, which was spiced wine sweetened with honey.

At the Royal Christmas dinner, which was served at noon,

the king sat in a high-backed chair, wearing his crown, at the head of the long oak table on trestles. His nobles, in strict order of precedence, sat on benches, and below the salt trench in the middle of the table were the court servants, who ate from the same joints and spits as the rest.

Table cloths were used, but they were also used as table napkins, so the gleaming white linen took a literal pasting. Music was provided by the court minstrel, when he could make himself heard above the din.

One advantage of the Saxon Christmas feast was that, like Jorrockes, where "they dines, they sleeps." They didn't even have to stagger upstairs to bed. The women retired to the bower, and the men pulled the tables off the trestles and curled up on the rush-strewn floor.

★ ★ ★

One year before this Richard II, who had just rebuilt Westminster Hall, "kept a most Royal Christmas there with daily jousting and runnings at the tilt, whereunto resorted such a number of people that there was every day spent twenty-eight or twenty-six oxen, and three hundred sheep, besides fowls without number." It was his last, for in 1399 he was deposed and murdered, and Henry IV succeeded to the throne. He had a tough time holding on to it, what with Hotspur, Owen Glendower, and Mortimer in revolt. But he broke their power two years later at the Battle of Shrewsbury, and handed over a stable government to his son, Prince Hal of Shakespeare and Harry the Fifth of Agincourt.

1400 The Normans brought their own menus with the Conquest and throughout the Middle Ages the Christmas feast increased in the number and variety of alternative dishes and wines offered to the diners.

It was called a three course meal, but there were enough choices in each course to baffle any modern hotelier.

The chief dish of the first course was Viand Royal—that is boar's head, served with hot spiced gravy and brawn with a tart sauce. You could also choose from roasted cygnets, pheasants, capons and herons; fried sturgeon with whelks, salmon pies, and roast porpoise; baked custard with dried fruits.

In the centre of the table was a *soltete* or *soly*, a monstrous confection of sugar and paste and wax, which was pulled to pieces at the end of the first course to reveal presents or favours.

The second course brought roast venison or venison in frumenty; chickens in saffron; peacocks, cranes, bitterns, rabbits, fried brawn with vinegar sauce, another custard and another *soly*.

By now you had knocked the edge off your appetite and could get down to the lightweight stuff in the third course, beginning with dillegroust. This was a concoction of almond milk, chopped parboiled chicken, capon brawn, sugar and spices. Then there was lark pie, quince pie, egrets, curlews, pigeons, quails, jellied eggs, and pastries.

Ale, mead and cider were still served with the dinner, but the quality of the wines had improved. The wines were not usually served straight. The favourites for Christmas were hippocras, a cordial made from wine and spices: claret or clarrie, red wine spiced and mixed with honey: and garbiofilue, white wine with cloves and honey.

★ ★ ★

It was little more than two years before the end of Elizabeth I's reign. The Armada had been defeated, and England was established as a great Power. It was the year Shakespeare wrote "As You Like It." The year before Spenser had died, and Ben Jonson had written "Every Man Out Of His Humour." It was the climax of a golden age in our history. But can one wonder that they wrote so nobly and fought so boldly, when they fed so well?

1600 During the sixteenth century the turkey had been introduced to England, but the goose was still the favourite bird, and the most popular Christmas dish was roast beef.

The Christmas dinner was still confined to three courses, but the



courses had grown more elaborate. The first course might run to thirty-two dishes. Sixteen of them were "full dishes."

Shield of brawn with mustard, boiled capon, boiled beef, roast beef, roast pork, roasted neats' tongues, baked chewets (these were pies containing finely chopped meat with spices), roast goose, roast swan, roast turkey, roast haunch of venison, venison pasty, a kid with pudding in the belly, olive pie, roast capons, and a custard.

The other sixteen were salads, fricassees, and pastries of various kinds.

Fish and game came on with the second course, with a choice from cod's head, salmon, smelts, shrimps, lobsters, prawns, sturgeon, woodcock, snipes, smews, and lark pie.

The sweets had become more recognizably Christmasy. In addition to fruit jellies and syllabubs, there were mine'd pies, Christmas pie, plum pudding and plum porridge.

Plum porridge was a plum pudding cooked without a cloth and served up in a tureen. Christmas pie was a formidable dish. According to one recipe, "it is a most learned Mixture of Neats-tongues, Chicken, eggs, sugar, raising, lemon and orange peel, and various kinds of spicery."

Strong ale was still the favourite drink. It was no longer all home-brewed; there were twenty-six breweries in London alone. The hot spiced ale of the wassail bowl was still popular, though now it was known as lambs-wool.

Home made cherry brandy and cordials were preferred to wines. But sack posset, made from hot milk curdled with Canary wine or sherry was the stuff to get the party going, as Falstaff well knew.

[Continued on page 57]





Johann Christian Bach spent the last years of his life in England. He was a close friend of Thomas Gainsborough, who painted this study of him

The Barriere d'Enfer; a scene between Rudolf and Mimi in Act 3 of Puccini's *La Boheme* in a production at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden



Harmonies of the Season

• SPIKE HUGHES •

ALTHOUGH Christmas must rate one way and another as the noisiest and most musical season of the year, composers—somewhat uncharacteristically—seem to have contributed remarkably little to the general seasonal din that is in any way topical or particularly apposite. For there is no doubt about it: where music is concerned Christmas is a People's Festival, and like their less gifted fellow-citizens, composers have shown every intention of keeping it that way.

There are, it is true, isolated examples of what one might call Special Christmas Numbers to be found among the classics. The six cantatas Bach wrote for Christmas week are sometimes lumped together and played in sequence at a single session (which their composer never intended, of course) under the collective title of "Christmas Oratorio"; but the result of this mistaken generosity is a somewhat overwhelming profusion of trumpets and drums planned to be heard at decent intervals and not in the course of a single evening. Then there are Corelli's "Christmas Concerto" (not a concerto according to Mr. Richard Addinsell's form book) and Haydn's so-called "Christmas Symphony." But with Haydn's most unconvincingly nicknamed piece the classical catalogue is more or less exhausted; the "Christmas Symphony," indeed, can barely be said to qualify at all. The composer associated its solemnity with Advent and (to confuse things properly) it has also in its time been called "Lamentations"; which hardly suggests that it is the sort of Christmas music we are looking for.

THE occupational inclination of composers to put their feet up around Christmastime perhaps explains why it has long been an almost universal custom to close the concert halls at this time of year, to interrupt, with a long and welcome interval, the merciless stayers' race known as the Musical Season. At least, this respite of three or four weeks is common in most civilized countries; the modern tendency in England to press on regardless is regrettable, but typical of that contradictory trait in the otherwise temperate English character: that of never knowing quite when to stop when there is enough of a good thing to have too much of. The mid-season recess I have in mind, however, is usually encountered only in the concert halls of the world. Opera houses rarely take much notice of Christmas, except in Italy where for three centuries it has been recognized as the day before the traditional opening date of the opera season. In a commendable effort to make the most of every remaining fast-free moment before Lent, this is known as the Carnival Season; which shows how differently Christmas can be celebrated in different countries. To us December 26 is Boxing Day, a day of recovery when nobody wants to start anything, least of all an opera season; to the Italians December 26, St. Stephen's Day, is the beginning of what is technically a long period of feasting which ends only with what must be the merciful arrival of Ash Wednesday.

And yet for all its traditional connection with Christmastide, opera itself is oddly indifferent to the dramatic or atmospheric possibilities of the season. There is a boisterous Christmas Eve scene in Puccini's *La Bohème* and there is a dramatically effective



A charming scene of Christmas piping in Italy in the year 1829

"Fill Ev'ry Glass." Peachum (George Devine) drinking with Locket (Stanley Holloway) to Macheath's capture in the Neagle-Wilcox film *The Beggar's Opera*



and ironic singing of a carol by children at the end of Massenet's *Werther*, but otherwise Easter, Shrove Tuesday and Carnival generally are much better represented on the musical stage.

So much for the moderate contribution of "art music" to Christmas. When it comes to traditional music, of course, it is another matter altogether, for there is no season with more songs to sing about itself than Christmas. And yet though Christianity is found in most parts of the world, the Christmas carol is far from being a universal affair.

It hardly exists at all in Ireland, for instance. Paradoxically, a famous Irish love song has been adapted to become an English carol, as we shall see later, but Ireland has produced none for itself that I know of. The nearest they can get to it—and it is a far-fetched business—is a delightful song called "The Christ Child Lullaby," which is supposed by tradition to be the tune sung by the Virgin Mary at Bethlehem, an exceedingly Celtic ditty indeed. But this has nothing specifically to do with Christmas; it certainly is not sung at Christmas only, and as often as not it can be heard as a functionally secular cradle song for any kind of child at all. At best it might be called a song on the subject of Christmas; apart from anything else, of course, it is essentially a *solo* song, and carols are just as essentially community songs.

Italy is another country virtually without carols as we know them. The home of *bel canto* does not sing at Christmas; its Christmas music is primarily instrumental, but appropriately pastoral in origin and to this day in Naples and Rome is supplied by shepherds (or musical mendicants purporting to be shepherds) who come down from the surrounding hills to play those instruments of picturesque simplicity and tremendously ancient origin which gave Handel the idea for his "Pastoral Symphony" in *Messiah*.

But even these instruments cannot really be considered exclusively associated with Christmas music, for the first pair of wandering *pifferari* I ever heard were ambling wearily through the dust and heat of summer near La Spezia. The *pifferari* work in pairs; they have to, for neither player has an instrument capable of sustaining musical interest for very long. The traditional duo consists of bagpipes, which can do very little more than keep the basic drone going (though it may just have been that the player I heard didn't know any tunes), and the actual *piffero*—a sort of oboe-shawm affair with a very home-made reed and no mechanical or mineral aids or devices like keys, valves, slides or such; it was a wooden tube you blew down, with a lot of holes cut into it, and that was all.

WHY this little musical team should have been out on the road, so far from its traditional home and out of its traditional season, I do not know. Unless, as I suspect, the *pifferari* have been a well-managed, all-the-year-round professional organization since the Middle Ages and have developed a fine sense of when and where to make the most profitable public appearances.

Only one thing has changed since the Middle Ages: the material the bag of the bagpipes is made of. Traditionally and immemorably these bagpipes have been made of goatskin—until the 1950s, when significantly it has been found cheaper to use a plastic substitute. There is no goatskin any more; the bag of the bagpipe is made from the inner tube of a discarded lorry tyre. The sound is the same, and in the dark of a Christmas night the look is very much the same, too. But what are they going to use when all lorry tyres are tubeless?

It is France that is the real home of the Christmas carol and the principal source of supply for the carols of other countries as well. In England to this day we sing at least three famous French carols: "Come All Ye Faithful," "Good Christian Men Rejoice" and "The First Nowell." The very word "Nowell," of course, is French; it not only means Christmas, but was the medieval term for a carol, which was known as a "Noël" or "Nouel." But just as the celebration of Christmas as a feast has its origin in pagan times (the early Christians adapted the ancient Roman *saturnalia* to suit their calendar), so a great many French carols have been adapted from popular songs entirely unconnected with Christmas or even with religion. The process was simple and effective: you took the first line of the words of the secular song and worked the words for the carol around it. It was an extremely successful method, for all anybody had to do was to learn a few new words to a familiar tune. (I remember years ago hearing the Salvation Army adapt "Yes, We Have No Bananas!" as a hymn and with considerable success. I do not know whether they still use popular songs in that way, but it used to be a flourishing practice, I believe.)

THE secular-song-into-sacred-carol system was by no means a one-way traffic, however, nor was it confined to France. One of the most lovely of all French carols, "Quel est cet odeur agréable?" became an English drinking song famous enough to be interpolated in *The Beggar's Opera* as the roisterous "Fill Ev'ry Glass!" In all fairness, though, it must be admitted that the French carol itself had originally been a secular song, so it was really only reverting to type in an unexceptionable manner. The only instance I know of a basically sacred carol being adapted to essentially secular purposes is that of one of the most famous and best of all English Christmas tunes. "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen!" was used with appropriately topical and propagandistic words as a political electioneering song in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (It is interesting to note that in spite of their devotion to this particular carol the English are notoriously incapable of putting the comma in its right place in the title. But Christmas phrases never seem to have been the merry English gentleman's strong point. In spite of a classical education at the best and oldest of academies nothing ever stops him—admittedly in a commendable display of universal friendliness to all—translating "*Et in terra Pax hominibus bonae*

[Continued overleaf]



King Wenceslas was well served by his song. Facts give his reign (1363-1419) a more unsavoury aspect

St. Francis of Assisi's image in the church of St. Maria degli Angioli, one of the glories of Assisi



voluntatis" as anything but "Peace on earth and goodwill to all men" instead of "Peace on earth to men of goodwill"—which is quite another matter.)

Change, translation, transformation and general messing about, however, are complaints common to various aspects of Christmas, and not least to Christmas carols. Take the hymn called "Forty Days And Forty Nights" which is sung in Lent, for instance. It is hard to believe that this was once a Christmas carol—and a particularly gay one from Germany, full of hallelujahs and with a longer, more sprightly tune to words almost identically translatable as "Good Christian Men Rejoice."

If that is a good instance of a carol slowed up to make a different kind of music, I recently came across a case of an English carol founded on the tune of an Irish love song which had been slowed up to be almost unrecognizably shorn of its pretty decorations and charm in a most unhappy way. The carol is famous as the one called "Dives And Lazarus," a typical subject for what is known by the nauseating term "folk-carol," and like most of its kind originating in the medieval mystery play—the "No. 1 plug," as it were, of the pantomime of its time. "Dives And Lazarus"—the version I know at least—is still sung in Herefordshire today to a tune known all over Ireland (it was almost certainly brought over by Irish harvesters) as "The Star Of The County Down," a song which tells of the charms of a nut-brown maid:

*From Bantry Bay up to Derry Quay,
From Galway to Dublin Town,
No maid I've seen like the brown colleen
That I met in the County Down.*

Christmas carols are a puzzling and paradoxical subject right from the start. The first carol was invented by St. Francis of Assisi; it was a dancing song to be performed at Christmastime in church round the crib. And yet Italy, where the idea originated, has virtually no Christmas carols at all; only shepherds with bagpipes made of inner tubes. Finally, we have a peculiarly English Christmas song which rates as a topical tune only by virtue of its title; this, unlike any of the lines in the epic of Good King W, at least includes the word "Christmas." Otherwise, I fear the growingly popular "The Twelve Days Of Christmas" must honestly be regarded only as a first-rate example of the I'll-give-you-One-O cumulative song, for there is not a single object in the repetitive catalogue of what that True Love brings to Her that can even remotely be associated with Christmas.

A NICE lot of gifts, if you look at it that way, but all a little eccentric and unpractical; especially if you consider the eminently sensible nature of the gifts brought on the original Twelfth Day by the Three Kings. Unlike most cumulative songs (I think especially of the monotonous "One Man And His Dog" and "Green Grow The Rushes-O"), the tune of "The Twelve Days Of Christmas" is full of invention and variety although its composer tended to dry up between Nos. 5 and 12 when there is a lot of relaxing reiteration. For this reason—the charm of Nos. 1 to 5, that is—this so-called Christmas song is a refreshing addition to the seasonal repertoire. And it will remain so, so long as we don't worry what on earth it is all about. This song is more wrapped up in mystery and mythology than you would believe possible, and once you start studying its implications and origins and Social Significance you will find yourself farther and farther away from Christmas—in the remote pagan world of fertility rites and the symbolism of the twelve months of the year.

Then, just when you are getting along nicely with all that, somebody will tell you that the whole thing is an Anglo-French macaronic probably from Norfolk and that all it amounts to is a gentle course in the direct method of teaching French. "A Partridge In A Pear Tree"—"A partridge est un perdrix." All right, but why should we have to be told that the French for partridge is "perdrix" no fewer than twelve times? And what has it got to do with Christmas? And, come to that, what has half of Christmas music got to do with Christmas either? Nothing, of course; which is why, in the end, there is more music for Christmas than for any other festival of the year. It is, thank heavens, that sort of festival; it is the season of goodwill, open houses, gigantic hangovers—and tunes whose credentials nobody wants to see. Which is just as well, for an awful lot of thoroughly shady tunes get by that way and one could not honestly do without them. Least of all at Christmas.



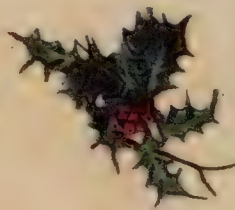
By courtesy of the National Gallery

A carol sung in paint to the Nativity

*The Christmas vision
of the Quattrocento*

OF the art that conceals art we hear much; and this painting by Piero della Francesca of the Three Kings at the stable of Bethlehem is one of the world's greatest examples of it. Pared away to an ultimate simplicity, every stick, stone and movement is loaded with symbolism, in colours that are wonderfully evocative. This great work, now in the National Gallery, speaks from an age of faith to one of bewilderment in a tone of supreme confidence

Julia Lawrence's Christmas Album



1895



Cousin
Bertie
sent me
this!
Aren't
Boys horrid?

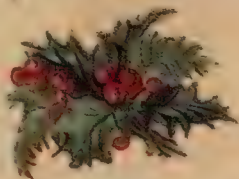


Father Christmas came down the
chimney all right. We had lots of
lovely presents and a Turkey



Uncle Edwin
rode across in
his new motor-
car and gave
me this
snapshot

1900



I wasn't well this year and
it didn't seem a bit like
Christmas here—



and I was rather sad when I thought
of them all skating on the lake at home
A creature like this bit me on
the beach on Boxing Day

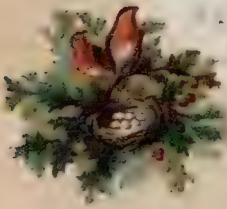


1903

Christmas at home this
Year — and
the most
wonderful one
ever!

I met
George at
all the
balls

He was
so affectionate
to my darling
Carlo!



1905

A perfect whirl this Christmas —
planning menus left me
quite exhausted



I had
some
really exquisite gowns
but Miss Rose made the
blue one abominably
tight.



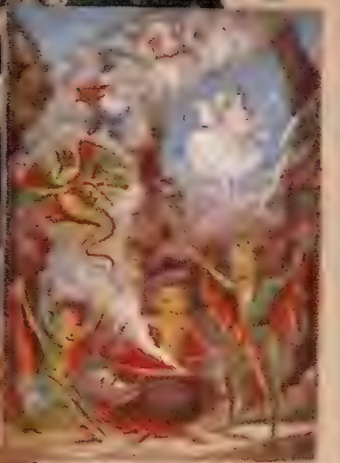
My little Georgie's first Xmas card

1906



sent by his Granmie

I
enjoyed the
Pantomime
quite as much
as all the
nephews
&
nieces



made by P.G.

Three Stories in Season

treating of the unseen world
remembered at this hour

No. 1—*The Ghost of Christmas Past*

THE CHATEAU DE JOIE

• Alex Potter •

ON a sunny day in September, 1815, the brothers George, William and Henry Colville, British Army captains who had fought at Waterloo, sat at a café terrace in Paris with the septuagenarian Comte de Joie, talking about grapes. Their father, a London wine merchant, had done business with the Count between the wars and, learning that he would visit Paris from his estate near Bordeaux, had asked him to meet his boys.

The brothers had been stationed in Paris for several weeks, they expected to be freed from the army any day, and their civilian outfits were ready.

Paris was relaxing after the war stresses, there was plenty of entertainment, and ardent young men who had survived Waterloo could have been forgiven for having a fling. The Colville brothers didn't want a fling, and spent most of their spare time polishing their creditable French.

Though similar in temperament, they were distinctly unlike in appearance. George, the oldest, had red hair; William, the next, was plump, with dimpled cheeks; Henry, who had stopped a bullet with a foot, was slightly lame.

The Comte de Joie, who had married late and was a widower, owned the village of Joie, a château, and three thousand acres of wine-land. He needn't have worked, but liked to be occupied. A man of considerable charm, he at once captured the brothers' affection, and when he said that, being professionally interested in

wine, they ought to see it growing, they guessed where he was leading. "We'll soon be preparing for the harvest," he said. "Why not spend a few days at the Château de Joie?"

He repeated the invitation, and the following week, their release from the army arriving, the brothers donned civilian clothes, took their places with the Count in a coach for four, inspected their pistols, and set off for the south-west.

The journey was far from tiresome. Everything about France interested the brothers, the Count seemed to know everything, and he was himself inquisitive, and a good listener.

A few miles from the village of Joie, the last change of horses was made for the ascent to the château. All were in good spirits when the journey was resumed but, with the château only half a mile away, the Count died.

It didn't happen quite as suddenly as that. George's account, given to his father, said that the Count, after a few minutes' silence, had looked at the brothers in turn with an amused smile, and said "Marvellous." It was the third time on the journey that he had so looked at them and said that word. George was about to ask *what* was marvellous, when the Count put a hand to his chest, said: "I feel very tired," slumped back in his seat, and, as George put it, "most unexpectedly departed."

"I'll hasten to the château," said George to his brothers and the coachman. "Wait a little, then follow slowly."

HE hastened to the drive, and was conducted by a merry-eyed lodge-keeper to the château, where a smiling footman passed him to a jovial-looking major-domo, who transferred him to the Count's sister, an ingratiating lady named Felicity who, suddenly grasping the import of his circumlocutory message, fell in a faint. George had carried her to a divan and was going for help, when laughter was heard, and Louise, Constance and Aline, the Count's daughters, aged twenty, nineteen and eighteen, entered the room.

In the years that followed, George often said: "Waterloo was an ordeal, but there are others." The brothers, however, were superb. The occasion, and its consequences, called for masculine attentions of distilled quality and, sensitive, discerning, and strong withal, they exercised it to the ladies' profound, if secret, admiration.

Why the Count had more than once smiled and said, "Marvellous," was at once apparent. Louise, the oldest sister, was red-haired; Constance was plump, with dimpled cheeks; Aline, as a

result of a riding accident when young, was slightly, but not at all unbecomingly, lame.

In the days that followed, the brothers could not tear themselves away from the place, the sisters did nothing to suggest that they should do so, and what with the brothers consoling the sisters and Aunt Felicity, and helping in the vineyards, and going riding with the sisters, and for walks with them, and lifting them over stiles and the girls reading the brothers' hands, and the brothers dislodging imagined specks from the girls' eyes, and . . . well, one thing leading to another, and the people in the village and in the château not being the sort to say, "It was rather soon after the funeral," a triple marriage took place at the end of November.

Colville père was there, his thoughts straying to lakes of burgundy sea-bound from Bordeaux to London at family prices. "There's certainly more room here than at home in Berkeley Square," he remarked when his sons said they would all live at the château. "No doubt," he added musingly, and with a half-smile, "you'll be able to find a use for it in time."



AUNT FELICITY, no longer needed as guardian, had gone to a far away sister, December was half spent, and the six young people were at table in the candle-lit, log-warmed dining-hall, when the Count was mentioned, and George reminded the sisters that they had never asked what happened that dreadful day. "I think you ought to know," he said. "Your dear father . . ."

"Stop," cried Louise. "There's something you, William and Henry ought to know. Papa will be here on Old Year's Night."

"He's here now, in our thoughts," said William.

"He will always be," observed Henry.

"But he'll be here in your *sight*," said Aline. "You tell them, Constance. They haven't been half curious enough about the family."

"We're so happy, that we don't want to inquire about anything," said Henry. "I used to wonder why everyone was so contented here—the people in the village, the château servants, everyone. . . . It's not merely the château's name. You can't make people happy simply by calling a place a Castle of Joy. I haven't asked anyone to explain, because I'm too busy being happy."

[Continued overleaf]



"All the same," said William, "I'd like to know how long this has been called the Château de Joie."

"Since 1490," said Constance. "Charles VIII—Charles the Affable, you remember—stayed here for a week, and was so happy, that he changed the name of the village to Joie and made gifts to the people. From that time we've had celestial favours too, for the head of the family is allowed to visit the château for an hour on Old Year's Night for five years after his departure. Papa will be with us in this very room. Aline has an idea about why the head of the family is allowed to return."

The brothers glanced at Aline, who said: "I think it's a privilege granted to our family in case the departure of its chief member is hastened, so to speak. Coming back, he or she could point a finger. Yes, the privilege is granted to ladies too. If Louise departs while she's head of the family, she'll be given an hour a year with us. I'd love to talk with Louise's ghost."

"Are you serious about all this?" asked William.

"You'll see," chorused the girls.

"How awful we'd feel," said William, "if one of us, possessed by the devil, had——"

"Quiet!" ordered George.

And quiet they were, the brothers each settling to his personal thoughts on the sister's revelation.

At five minutes to eleven on Old Year's Night, seven chairs formed a crescent before the dining-hall fire. The middle one was empty, the sisters occupied those on the right, the brothers those on the left.

"Aunt Felicity ought to be here," said Henry. "After all, she's the ghost's sister."

"She's afraid," said Louise. "But there's nothing to fear. Papa, who saw grandfather five times, said he looked just as he had known him, except for the transparency."

"The difference is important," said George.

"Do the ghosts know what is going on down here?" asked William.

"Only such things as superior ghosts tell them," replied Aline.

"Surely your father is a superior ghost," said George.

"He is in a way," said Aline. "But he's a beginner, and service counts. But now I have a feeling that Papa is about."

Her sisters, and the brothers, also said they had a strange feeling. Next moment there was a sound of wind hitting the château, and the centre chair was seen to be occupied by the ghost of the Comte de Joie, looking, except for the transparency, just like the real thing.

"A minute's silence," it said, "while I take it in. The dream's fulfilment, I mean. Looks as though it happened. Everything above board? All married, I mean?"

"Yes, Papa," said the girls.

"Happy?" asked the ghost, glancing with the old charm at the brothers.

"Couldn't be happier, sir," all replied.

"Did like marry like?"

"Yes, Papa," cried the girls in unison.

The ghost rubbed its hands and said: "Marvellous."

"How did it happen?" asked Aline.

"Your going, I mean. George says you just felt tired."

The ghost looked at George.

"You held a pistol."

"Yes."

No appalling thought occurred to the sisters, no fears seized the brothers.

The ghost looked at William and Henry.

"You also held pistols."

"True," said William. "With the château in sight, we were putting them away. Henry, you remember, said he was sorry we hadn't met a highwayman."

"I remember. Sorry I went without an *au revoir*. It was my heart. I had a warning in Paris, but said nothing. I did a little too much there. I was seventy-two, you know. A good spell. But I wanted to see the dream fulfilled. What does your father say?"

"He was here for the weddings," said George. "Everything delighted him."

"You all living here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Happily?"

"Couldn't be happier."

"Wonderful. Staying here to run the place?"

"If you agree, sir."

"Agree? Ha, ha."

After a long talk, a good deal of it about the estate, the wine trade, the condition of the vineyard, and other topics of a strictly practical nature, the ghost bade the brothers *au revoir*, and asked for a few minutes' privacy with the girls.

"I still can't help thinking," said William when he and his brothers were out of earshot, "how awkward it would be if one of us, when handling those pistols——"

"Do be quiet," commanded George.

WHEN the ghost returned the following year, it found the chairs arranged in the same way, fewer candles burning, the brothers whispering, and each of the sisters with a sleeping baby in her arms. Again the brothers reported that all was well. In the following year the sisters each held a sleeping baby—a new one—and there were three more on each of the fourth and fifth visits.

"If they're all alive, this makes twelve," said the ghost on what was thought to be its last appearance. "Are they all alive?"

"Yes, Papa," said the sisters.

"As this is your last visit," remarked Louise, "you must spend more time looking at those asleep. With all these descendants around, and, from what I hear, dozens more to come, it's more than ever a pity you won't be with us again."

"Dozens?" asked the ghost.

"Why not?" said George. "There's room, we've money, we like children."

"Everything still all right—commercially, domestically, sentimentally?"

"That was slightly out of order, sir," said Henry.

"Right, my boy. Sentimentally, domestically, commercially. Was I correct in telling my superiors there hasn't been a quarrel?"

"Quite right, sir."

"There never has been a quarrel in the Château de Joie."

"We never quarrelled at home," said William.

"This is different," said the ghost. "Three families in one house."

"Two," said Henry. "Yours and ours. And a house of eighty rooms."

"You could have had different opinions about running the house."

"We *do* have different opinions. About many things. When necessary,



"Put out ye rushe lights and let's play Murder"

[Continued on page 60]



Three Stories in Season

No. 2—*The Ghost of Christmas Present*

THE PICTURE

• Barbara Balch •

I HAD enjoyed sitting for my portrait. I remembered wistfully the winter afternoons spent in Stefan's studio where I used to sit, very comfortably, facing the wide window that looked out on to the river. Away on the right I could see the little island where he had once spent a night, huddled among the rushes like Moses, for a bet. If I moved my eyes a little, which I was seldom permitted to do, I could see Stefan himself, in a dirty blue sweater and corduroy trousers, tousled, unshaven; and looking every inch an artist.

Inside the studio it was deliciously warm. A huge stove, prehistoric in design, stood in the centre of the room (in the best Continental tradition, I was assured) and radiated the most gratifying heat.

While he was painting Stefan was in a mood of high exhilaration: he talked continually and most entertainingly. He told me about his childhood in Prague, his youth in Paris and the subsequent wanderings which had finally led to his riverside studio in London.

"I love painting you, Sarah," he once said. "You have my favourite type of face. Only once before have I encountered it. I am very happy to paint you, and I feel the picture will have all my happiness reflected in it. You sit very well. Some women talk all the time and are so restless." He scowled and made one of those expressive gestures with his hands which endeared him so deeply to his phlegmatic English friends.

When the picture was finished, I could see that it was a wonderful

likeness and in addition possessed all the best qualities of his work.

He put his arm through mine as we stood and looked at it together.

"I think it's marvellous, Stefan. I'll send you a cheque for it straight away."

"You have been so generous and good, Sarah darling. You have made this trip on the Continent possible for me. Have I told you that I am off tomorrow to Paris for Christmas and afterwards to Rome? Before I go I will have your picture framed for you and will arrange for it to be delivered to your house."

I WALKED home slowly and with the studied, habitual elegance which was my stock-in-trade as—I must admit it—one of the most sought-after fashion models in London. Superb coincidence had given me the features and measurements which were currently recognized as chic; and the success they had brought me enabled me to spin around myself a cocoon of luxury and easeful living which, up to now, had never been shaken or penetrated by sorrow. At times my immunity worried me; I felt in need of a talisman against an unspecified evil which I was sure must soon visit me.

As I approached the square it seemed to be getting much darker. I have always been afraid of the dark, and I hurried a little towards the white wedge of façade which proclaimed my home. In the

[Continued overleaf]

hall I paused, breathless, for a moment, glancing in the long mirror which I had placed at one end. I was too well acquainted with my likeness, which appeared on every other page of the glossy magazines, to be more than casually interested in a face and body which not only I, but the whole world, knew so well; but today I noticed something strange. I drew nearer to the glass. It might have been the rather dramatic hairstyle and make-up I had acquired for my portrait which accounted for a certain unfamiliar quality in my appearance. I had the sudden disturbing sensation that I was staring at somebody else.

The air in the hall felt colder and less friendly, and with a shudder of extreme distaste I ran from the mirror into the drawing-room. With a glass of whisky in one hand and the telephone in the other, I commandeered the reassurance of my gayest friends and left the house as quickly as I could to spend the rest of the evening with them.

A WEEK later my portrait arrived. I had asked Jill and Diana to help me dress my Christmas tree and we were sitting on the floor surrounded by tinsel and coloured streamers when the door-bell rang, not once, but several times, as if an irritated caller had been trying to make himself heard. I hurried to the door and there, on the top step, well wrapped but unmistakable, was the picture. Whoever had brought it had been too impatient to wait. I looked round the square but it was empty except for a lonely taxicab; and the dead leaves scurrying round the railings.

I tore the brown paper wrappings off and the picture began to emerge. The little group round the fire became strangely silent.

Diana spoke first.

"It's wonderful, of course, Sarah darling; but it isn't quite you."

I propped it up against the wall and stood beside her. Then I gasped. An unfamiliar young woman, with widely spaced grey eyes and glossy blonde hair, was staring out of the frame at me.

"Of course it isn't me—it's somebody else! Stefan has obviously sent me the wrong picture and now he is enjoying himself on the Continent, on my money, and I shan't be able to do a thing about it until he gets back. It's absolutely maddening!"

I felt wretchedly disappointed. It was such a foolish, humiliating mistake.

Jill uncurled herself and got up from the sheepskin rug.

"She's rather lovely, Sarah, and strangely enough she is awfully like you. She could very well be your sister. How extraordinary that her picture should be delivered instead of your own!"

"I think that makes it easier to explain," Diana suggested. "The artist probably asked the people who were framing it to call for it and they collected the wrong one. It is very like Sarah; I can understand a mistake being made."

"But I've never seen this picture at Stefan's studio, although he showed me everything he had there. I can't imagine how he could



have been so careless. I suppose I shall just have to keep it here until he comes back to England again."

That evening I took the painting upstairs to my bedroom and placed it on a small gilded table under the standard lamp. Although it was unsigned it was surely Stefan's work and I longed to speak to him again and to ask him to tell me the identity of this mysterious woman who had suddenly entered my life.

I remembered Jill and Diana had said she was like me. Fascinated by the recollection I contrived, with some difficulty, to arrange matters so that the image of the strange woman appeared in the dressing table mirror beside my own. It was fantastic! The face in the picture, transposed in reflection, had assumed a quality of likeness to me which was quite uncanny. Dispassionately I compared our faces, feature for feature. I ran a comb through my hair, lifting it off my forehead in the way she wore hers: I darkened my brows slightly and reddened my lower lip into a more sensual curve. Then, stare for stare, I returned that haunted, tormented gaze of hers until I began to wonder which of us was real.

EACH evening when I returned home I went straight upstairs and gazed, sometimes for hours, at the portrait. It had become a part of my life; and I became possessed with a feeling that there was some bond between this unknown girl and myself. I caught sudden glimpses of myself, in shop windows, with my head tilted and my lips half parted in imitation of her. I even took to wearing a rose-coloured brocaded scarf identical with the one she had thrown round her shoulders for her portrait.

My original interpretation of her expression, as fresh shades and subtleties constantly revealed themselves to me, gave way to a conviction that she was searching for someone, or for something. Wherever I stood, try as I might, I could never meet her gaze; it was always focused above or beyond me. And yet my whole being seemed to be linked with hers in some indefinable way. The thought that I could have resented her arrival, have considered her an intruder, was now inconceivable to me.

The obtrusive gaiety of Christmas had failed to touch me, and during the weeks that followed I found that I had associated myself so deeply with her personality that I felt that I, too, was searching for someone.

Occasionally, as strangers approached me, I saw a happy look of recognition give way to one of fear, even horror, as they drew closer and met my blank, unknowing stare. Once in a crowded thoroughfare I heard my name called wildly, but on hearing it a





second time I knew I was mistaken. It wasn't my name I had heard, but another's; and inwardly I knew it must be hers. My work suffered. There were whisperings and raised eyebrows as I passed through the offices of the fashion magazines. The telephone rang less frequently.

It may be that the whole affair had laid too strong a hold upon my imagination for I developed, without warning, a high temperature, and in a state of utter collapse went to bed where I tossed feverishly for nearly a week. This curious illness left me as suddenly as it had come. I felt weaker, but in a way refreshed and renewed. I was anxious to take up my work and my social life once more, and my obsession with the picture seemed unaccountably to have left me.

It was, I think, a day or so later when I heard again the insistent ring of the door-bell. A tall, tired looking man hesitated on the step. His eyes lightened and they rested upon me a moment too long before he spoke:

"I have come for the picture," he said.

I felt no surprise, only relief.

"I am so glad. I will fetch it for you."

I left him waiting in the hall and returned with the portrait, which I held up before him.

He took it, gazed at it for a while, and then turned to me.

"Thank you very much. I am most grateful to you."

"Not at all. I am only sorry that it was delivered here by mistake. You see, I was expecting my own portrait and this one arrived instead."

"I am sure it was not a mistake." He half smiled and added: "It is a picture of my wife."

"Really? My friends say she is a little bit like me."

"Yes, indeed. That is how I knew where to come for it."

Before I had realized the strange implication of his words I heard myself saying, in my rather brittle, social manner:

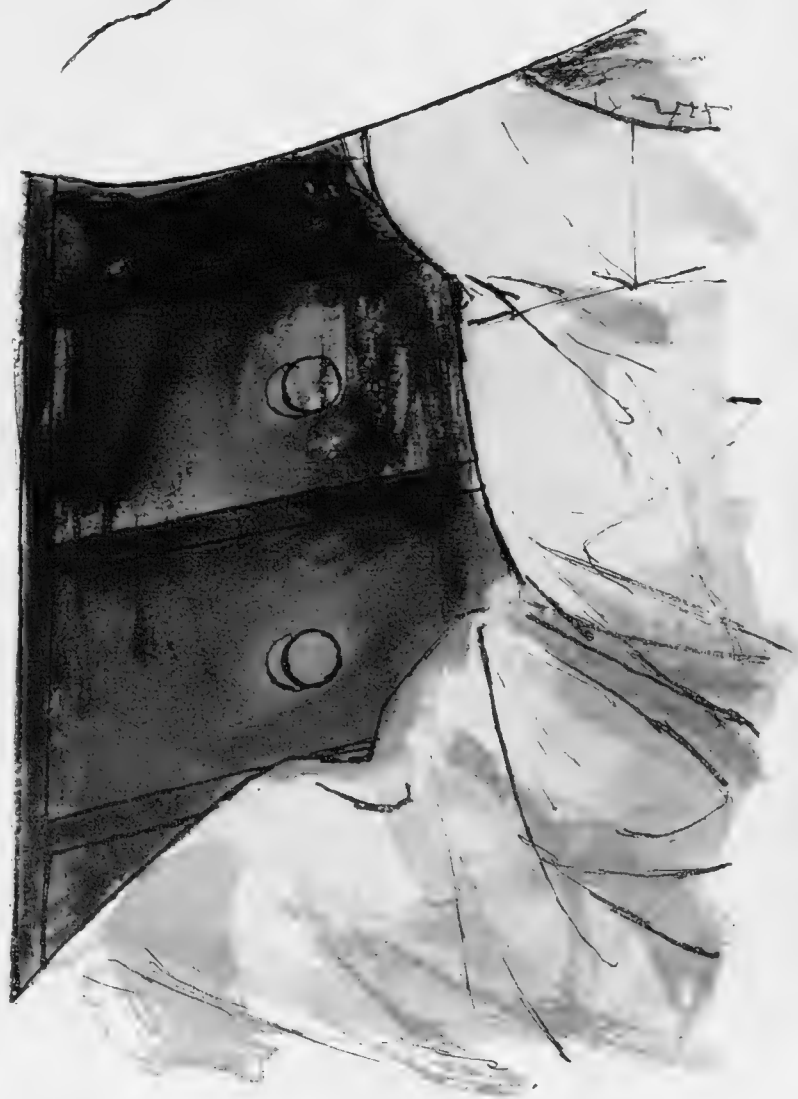
"Will you ask her to come and see me one day? It would be such fun if we could meet. Perhaps I could telephone her?"

He turned back at the bottom of the steps and a look of great sadness passed over his face.

"Oh, no. I am sorry. You see, she is dead."

★ ★ ★

I heard from Stefan again in the early spring. He was horrified to find my picture still in his studio. Would I ever forgive him? I wrote and told him that there was nothing to forgive.



Three Stories in Season

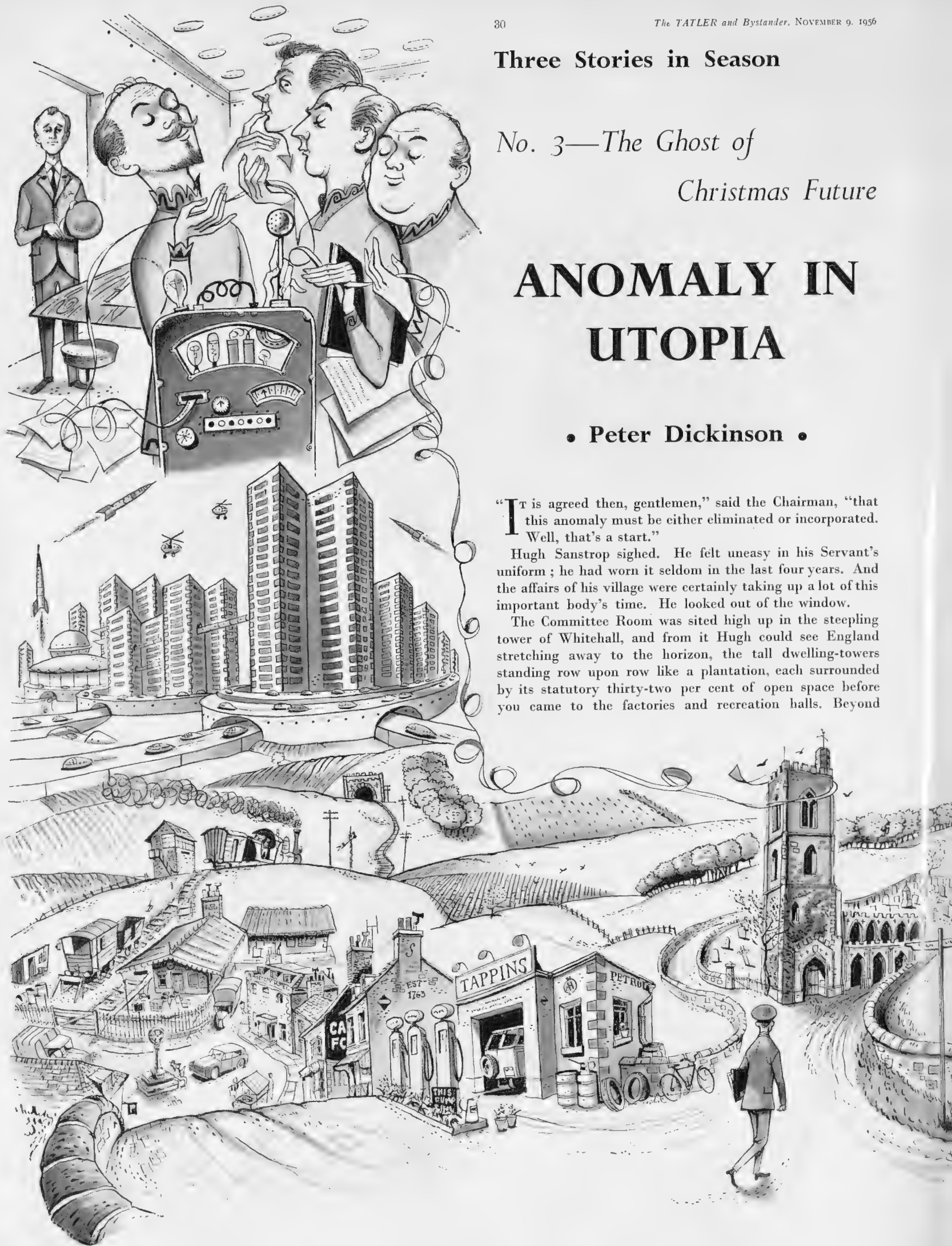
No. 3—*The Ghost of
Christmas Future***ANOMALY IN
UTOPIA**

• Peter Dickinson •

"It is agreed then, gentlemen," said the Chairman, "that this anomaly must be either eliminated or incorporated. Well, that's a start."

Hugh Sanstrop sighed. He felt uneasy in his Servant's uniform; he had worn it seldom in the last four years. And the affairs of his village were certainly taking up a lot of this important body's time. He looked out of the window.

The Committee Room was sited high up in the steeping tower of Whitehall, and from it Hugh could see England stretching away to the horizon, the tall dwelling-towers standing row upon row like a plantation, each surrounded by its statutory thirty-two per cent of open space before you came to the factories and recreation halls. Beyond





the horizon it was the same, except for the few green miles that surrounded the village. Hugh felt depressed. It struck him that it might be tidier after all if his fields and lanes were ironed out to provide space for more towers, factories and recreation halls.

As if to echo his thought a flippant Under Secretary remarked: "Bit of an anomaly itself, the village, isn't it, I mean?"

There was a silence, one or two shocked coughs, and a computer circuit fused at the suggestion. The village was scheduled as an Amenity under the Act, so its status could

not be altered except by Parliament. Parliament had not met for a hundred and five years. The village in fact was sacrosanct. None of the rocket-routes ruled its dry brush trails across the sky there, and the highways, which looked from above like an airfield got out of hand, curved from their straightness that the village might maintain its walls of quiet.

A visitor to the village (not many came) left his car at the lanehead and was driven on in a replica of a twentieth-century vehicle; the world seemed to change; he drove between hedges enclosing fields in which medieval tractors and combine-harvesters fidgeted with the land for all the world as if hydroponics didn't exist. The weather people usually tried to let the weather over the village take its natural course, so that the visitor often found it raining. In this unnatural grey haze he could wander round the rows of period council houses, peer through railings at one or two larger, even older buildings, muse round the railway buildings, stroll into the church and, feeling suddenly cold in its odd, ornate nineteenth-century glooms, head for the pub. There he would find a few traditionally uncommunicative villagers watching black and white television.

Of course, in this day and age, it was impossible to allow the village to be run solely on the principle of rule by nostalgia. There had to be a Servant, and now it was Hugh Sanstrop. Because both his status and his uniform might seem out of key with the rest of the village he had the job of Stationmaster and wore the antique uniform of that office. It suited his grey hair, brown, worried face and spare body, though he still held his head as if his Adam's apple were being nudged on either side by the stiff collar of the Service. There was only one train a week, the last in

England, which brought the villagers whatever they did not produce themselves, so there was plenty of time for Hugh to do his real job of looking after their forms and lives. . . .

There was a murmur of interest in the room as a Folk-lore computer which had been specially assembled chattered excitedly and spewed out twenty copies of the same short message. They were handed out, and Hugh read:

THERE ARE TWO APPROVED METHODS OF DISPOSAL OF GHOSTS STOP ONE LAYING STOP THIS IS DONE BY DISCOVERING THE CAUSE OF THE HAUNTING USUALLY SOME INJURY DONE TO OR BY THE GHOST AND QUOTE SETTING IT TO RIGHTS UNQUOTE STOP METHOD TWO EXORCISM STOP THE APPARATUS FOR THIS NO LONGER EXISTS MESSAGE ENDS

"INTERESTING but unhelpful," said a Deputy Secretary. There was a gloomy silence. Hugh remembered the first time he had seen the stranger. He saw himself walking up the hill towards the garage to talk to Tappin about petrol deliveries. Tappin was a large man with a round body, small legs and a small, pear-shaped head, pointed end upmost; his body sat in his trousers like an egg in an egg-cup. It was late spring and, whatever one went to talk to Tappin about at that time of year, one always ended by visiting his polyanthus border, so Hugh, as soon as he had made his point, began glancing round, subconsciously looking for an excuse to avoid this enjoyable but time-taking ritual. It was then that he saw the stranger in the church porch.

"One moment," he said, and walked up the road. When he reached the porch the stranger was no longer there, but Hugh found him inside. He was a small, nearly bald man with a round grey face and



[Continue] overleaf

intelligent eyes ; he wore a wrinkled brown suit rather like the villagers' second-best, though it would have looked out of place anywhere else in England. Hugh spoke to him with the Servants' form of address :

"Can I help you?" he said.

"No incense, no incense," said the stranger peevishly, stroked his hand back over his head as though ruffling non-existent hair, and turned abruptly away round a pillar. Hugh followed him but found the church empty.

When he came out of the church he saw Tappin and young Tappin—the same shape as his father but less nobly moulded, only a medium-grade egg—watching him, each with a worried frown on their minute foreheads. It was only later that he realized that the villagers had known about the ghost for some time.

Eventually they had become a bit less secretive, and had provided quite a lot of information about the ghost's behaviour ; this Hugh had embodied in his report, and a bank of computers in one corner were clucking away at it now, trying to collate the odd details : his murmurs of "Fish-knives" and "Hockey-girls," his muttering about concrete lamp-posts, the fact that Tappin claimed to have had an intelligible conversation with him about a few late chrysanthemums, his lecturer-type gestures and general interest in the structure of the church.

As the machines clucked and winked more urgently the Committee fell silent. Then there was the chatter of typing and another report was handed round :

IT IS NINETY-TWO PER CENT PROBABLE THAT GHOST IS THAT OF JOHN BETJEMAN TWENTIETH-CENTURY PANELLIST SOCIAL AND ARCHITECTURAL CRITIC AND MINOR POET STOP IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY HE IS RECORDED AS MINOR AS THE TWENTIETH CENTURY DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE PRODUCED ANY MAJOR POETS STOP A LIST OF HIS DISLIKES IS ENCLOSED AS APPENDIX A STOP NOTHING ELSE IS KNOWN STOP THE GHOST IS PROBABLY HARMLESS MESSAGE ENDS

"Well, that's something," said the Chairman rather desperately. Every fresh discovery seemed to make their task harder. It had seemed quite easy when they had all really believed that Sanstrop was having hallucinations. It was easy to explain for one thing. He had been working quite hard, and all Stationmasters had been troubled by cranks, minor or temporary anomalies among the national personnel who thought that they would be happier living "the simple life." They tried to leave the numbered comfort of their skyscraper flats, where everything was ordained and easy, and sneak into the immensely more complicated community life of the village. It would not be surprising if a tired Stationmaster saw an imaginary one, so they'd had Hugh psychocomputed and drawn blank.

Now, at last, they were confronted with a

real, copper-bottomed, properly documented, unprecedented anomaly. Every Servant knew that all trouble arose through anomalies ; there were precedents for dealing with everything else. So this immensely powerful committee existed for dealing with anomalies. They met more and more rarely, but when they did there was a feeling almost like panic in the Service until they had dealt with the situation and created a new precedent.

THEY stared glumly at Appendix A. It was enormously long and started off ironically with the single word "Amenities."

"Couldn't we," said the Chairman, "document him as a unit of personnel and ration him as a non-consumer like that fakir chap at Hove?"

"Can you document a U.P. without his consent?" asked someone.

A machine clucked : IN CASES OF LUNACY AND COMPLETE PARALYSIS.

"Anyway, he's got to have documents," said the Chairman. "Can't have a U.P. without the proper forms. Might as well be going about starko."

"But," said the flippant Under Secretary, "when he does this vanishing trick of his you've got the forms without the U.P., haven't you?"

MOST IRREGULAR, commented a computer, leaving the Under Secretary to realize that a computer was the only thing that had less sense of humour than a Servant.

A lean Deputy Secretary turned towards the folk-lore machine. "Are you certain," he said, "that a ghost is a U.P.?"

Some of the computer's valves lit up in an irritated way but the answer clattered out composedly enough :

HAVE NEVER SAID SO STOP GHOSTS ARE PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

A sigh of relief went round the table. Now, they felt, they were getting somewhere.

"WELL that makes things easier," said the Chairman. "You just add it to the establishment. Straightforward paper work after we've put an order through. What category?" he added to his secretary.

The secretary clucked and winked. ACCESSORY AMENITY she announced.

Hugh swore under his breath. He knew, without Appendix A, what Betjeman thought about amenities ; the ghost seemed to use the word as a swearword and the church turned five degrees colder when he did so. Hugh made one last effort.

"Isn't it possible," he said, "that Betjeman is haunting us because he once insulted the village on one of those roving television quizzes when he was alive. I've seen his name with some others carved on a plaque in the TV Cathedral at Shepherds Bush. Does this mean that when we've got him cosy on the establishment he'll be joined by A. J. P. Taylor, Gilbert Harding, Malcolm Muggeridge, and other legendary

figures. One's enough, the villagers feel."

"I don't see what you're worrying about," said the Chairman kindly. "After all, you'll have a precedent."

"You'll have a precedent," chorused the committee.

When he got home Hugh changed and went to the pub ; it was about half an hour before closing time. He didn't normally talk about the Service but he thought the villagers ought to know what had been decided. Tappin was in the bar with several of his cronies. The innkeeper, Renwick, a fierce little man, leaned on the bar. They all listened politely as Hugh spoke, but weren't really very interested until he got to the new category.

Then Renwick thumped on the bar and shouted : "Amenity. Amenity, you say? He won't like that, not at all. What you all want to go meddling for I don't know. Nice friendly ghost, credit to the place, and all you clever people can do is go upsetting him with your categories. Still," he added, calming down, "I daresay he won't take it in, not much ; lives in the past rather."

Tappin wagged his small head sadly. "I daresay you tried to stop 'em, Mr. Sanstrop, I daresay. Betjeman you say his name is? Foreigner likely, very likely, but he fits in all right. But he won't take it easy."

That was the worst of it. The committee, in an odd access of illogicality, had instructed Hugh to tell Betjeman of his new status. They seemed to think he would appreciate it. Hugh finished his beer sadly.

THE first two or three times he went to look for Betjeman the ghost wasn't there, but he found him at last one weeping October morning, fingering the rood screen. The church seemed darker than ever. Hugh walked up to him and said, "Excuse me."

Betjeman turned mildly towards him and said : "Ah, Stationmaster, it's not like the old North Eastern, is it?"

"The committee of the Service," said Hugh very formally, "have decided to regularize your position by adding you to the official establishment."

The ghost seemed to take this as a compliment and nodded in a bright, pleased, uncomprehending way. Hugh hesitated. Then he said : "You have been added to the schedule as an Accessory Amenity."

The ghost stood stock still. Winter seemed to finger the aisle. Hugh's breath came in clouds as he continued hurriedly : "Notice of intended appeal must be lodged at my office within fourteen days."

Betjeman turned on his heel and shuffled off round the pulpit. Hugh realized that they would not see him again. He walked out into the warm autumn rain. When he came to the garage he went in and told Tappin what had happened.

Tappin wagged his head. "I expect you had to do it," he said. "I expect you had to."

Then Hugh went home to spend three more days on the paper work needed to remove a Ghost from his Establishment.



**"Let good digestion wait on
appetite, and Art on both"**

Sir Geoffrey Cory-Wright, Bt.

THE familiar toast may be justifiably altered in the presence of a picture which recalls the magnificent still lifes of the Dutch and French masters—depicting as it does some of the choicest ingredients of a Christmas feast. Nothing could well give a sharper edge to the appetite. It is a work that should be studied by all good trenchermen, in conjunction with its companion piece on page 36 and the accompanying article

This mortal Coil

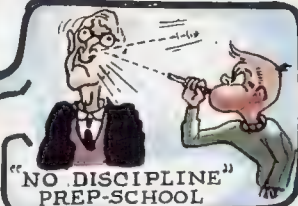
THE way to fame and fortune is traditionally sown with the direst pitfalls. Any superman who boasts that he can avoid them all is advised to venture into Mallet's Maze, where he may very possibly find some surprises awaiting him

Begin - without option - at Birth



Inferiority Complex

T.V. Obsession



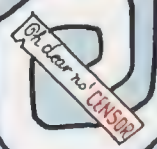
"NO DISCIPLINE" PREP-SCHOOL



The Demon Drink



Left-Wing Tendencies



Wrong School



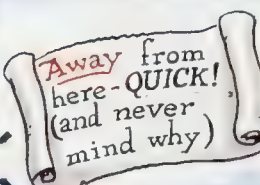
FAST CARS



UNPROFITIOUS GIRL-FRIENDS



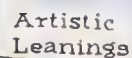
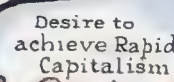
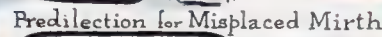
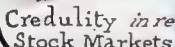
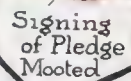
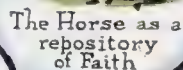
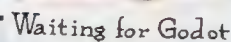
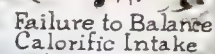
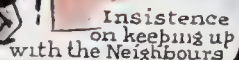
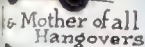
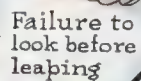
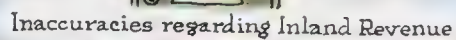
PIMPLES



Away from here - QUICK!
(and never mind why)



Unshakable belief in elves and fairies



QUEEN ANNE silver punchbowl, known as a Monteth, reflects in its glow all the ingredients that go to the making of this most warm-hearted of drinks—the rum in elegant flasks, the orange curacao, cinnamon sticks and nutmeg with a grater, lemons and lemon peel, and finally a graceful glass jug to hold the liquid



Sir Geoffrey Cory-Wright, Bt.

PACKING A POWERFUL PUNCH

by Isaac
Bickerstaff



ONCE again the turkeys are on the table, or soon will be, the holly is round the room and the mistletoe in a convenient place; there is probably more wine in the house than usual, the rum has been put into the plum pudding mix and everybody has had a stir; the presents have been wrapped up and hidden away, and the stockings, the largest available, are hanging on the ends of the beds. All, in short, is ready for Christmas Day, which should be a day of feasting and fun.

The evening should be concluded in a fit and proper manner with a fine dinner and when mellowed with good wine you can sit round and drink toasts to all and sundry far into the night—and what better way to drink them than from a great bowl of some powerful punch.

Although the great Professor Saintsbury abhorred what he called “mixed liquors,” he absolved punch from his condemnation, writing in his *Notes On A Cellar Book*: “Punch escapes by virtue of its numerous venerable and amiable associations and to speak frankly its undeniable charms.”

T. A. Layton, writing about mulling wine and hot drinks in general, says: “Punch is more fun and holds far greater scope for the ingenious. Rum is unquestionably the ideal basis for punch, and it is a myth that this is a more harmful spirit than any other. On the other hand, it possesses more esters (the only ingredient chemists cannot explain in alcohol—which gives brandy its flavour and tonic) than any spirit save brandy. Limes, lemons and oranges—any two are better than one—do wonders in taking away too much of the highly characteristic flavour of rum. Nutmeg and sugar are also

necessary, and the only other guide is that the non-alcoholic liquid (i.e. the hot lemonade, etc.) which goes into the punch bowl should be about twice as much as the spirit. Try also hot, strongish China tea in place of hot lemon, but adding a fair amount of its grated peel."

Regarding tea, A. R. Woolley of United Rum Merchants says: "My own knowledge is I am afraid limited to rum punch, for somewhat obvious reasons. I believe that there is a golden rule in the making of all punches, hot and cold: the rule is never add water, but dilute with freshly made tea. Some people prefer to use China tea—I do, but whether you use China or Indian, the fact remains that the punch made with tea is altogether softer and more pleasant than the same recipe to which any water has been added. Perhaps the greatest charm in punches is to be found in their flexibility: no drink, or form of drink, I think, gives the concocting artist more scope."

It was in 1655, when they took Jamaica from Spain, that the English were first introduced to rum and to punch.

Lindsay Ring, whose firm supplies Birch's Punch, which has been served at banquets in the City of London for over two centuries, points out that in the eighteenth century many taverners put up the "punchbowl" as their sign when they wished to attract Whig customers, as this drink was particularly favoured by them. There are still many inns showing the Punchbowl as part of their sign, together with some other trade symbols.

There are hundreds of different recipes for making punch and some of these are included in many cookbooks. Here are one or two taken from *A Concise Encyclopaedia Of Gastronomy*, by André Simon. They are probably beyond most people's capacity, both in cost, time and trouble, but they sound exciting and show that some people paid the matter great attention. As the Duke of Norfolk has just been celebrating the coming-out of his daughter, let us start with the Duke of Norfolk's Punch: to a gallon of rum or brandy take six lemons and six oranges. Pare them as thin as you can and put the parings into the spirit and let them steep for twenty-four hours. Afterwards take six quarts of spring water and three pounds of loaf sugar. Boil the water and sugar for a quarter of an hour and clear it with whites of eggs. When the sugar and water is cold, strain the parings from the brandy or rum and squeeze in your juice of oranges, etc., through a strainer to keep out the seeds. Then mix altogether and turn it into a vessel. Here it must remain for six weeks at least, unbottled.

THE Chilean Three-Day Punch sounds well worth the trouble if you have got a big party. First day: pare yellow rind from nine lemons with sharp knife, so thinly that none of the bitter white adheres. Put in a quart jar and pour on one pint fine Jamaica rum. Screw cover right down and set aside. Second day: put two pounds loaf sugar in another jar and squeeze over them the juice of those nine skinned lemons. Screw cover down and set snugly by the side of the rum-and-rind jar. Third day: mix contents of both jars in a big punchbowl, pour in three pints rum and five quarts distilled water, or water that has been boiled and cooled, with two pints boiling hot milk. Let it drain slowly through a flannel bag, without squeezing.

Royal Punch: one pint of hot green tea, half a pint of brandy, half a pint of Jamaica rum, one wineglass of white curaçao, one wineglass of arrack, the juice of two limes, a thin slice of lemon, white sugar to taste, a gill of warm calf's foot jelly. To be drunk as hot as possible.

Here's a cold one. Tea Punch: one pint rum, one and a half cups sugar, six lemons, one tablespoon brandy, two cups strong tea. Peel the lemons thinly and pour the tea boiling hot over them. Squeeze the lemon juice on the sugar and let remain an hour or more. Mingle all together, and then mix over a bowl of crushed ice. This would serve about six people.

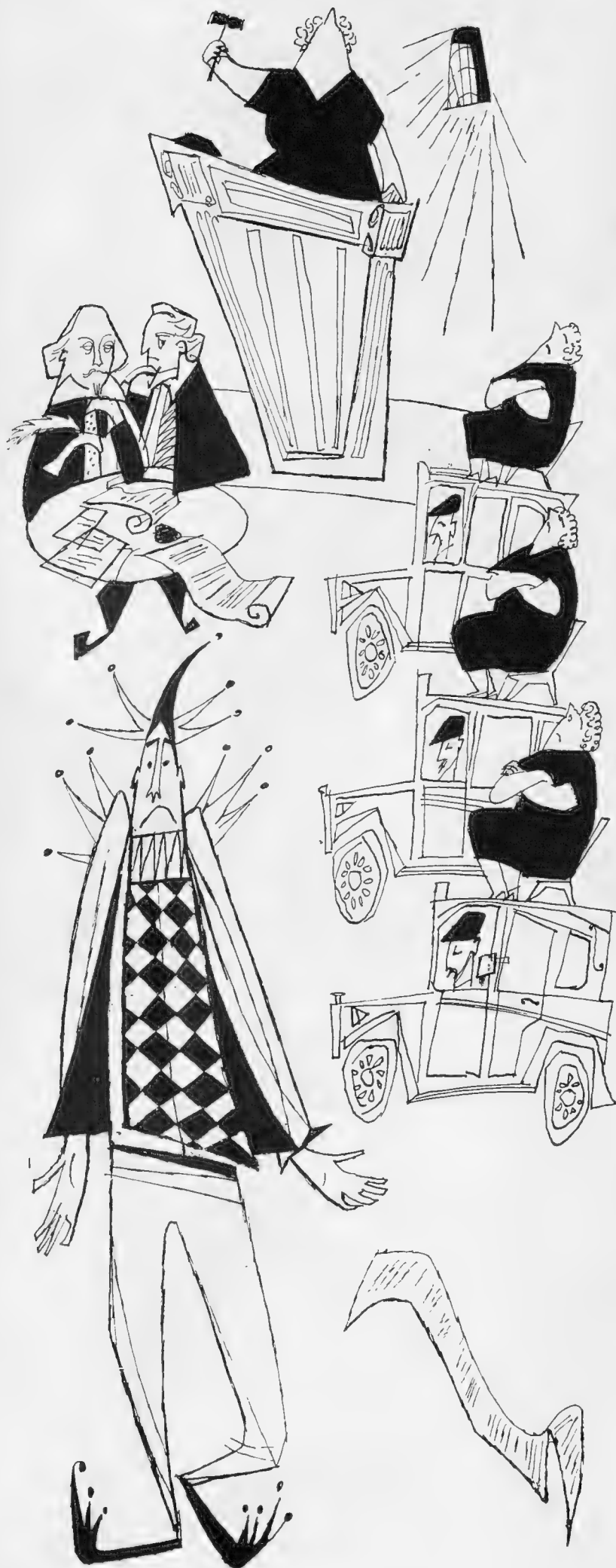
A nice simple punch with plenty of guts to it for a cold winter's night is to mix a bottle of rum with a bottle of alcoholic ginger wine.

So there you are, put some punch into Christmas this year.

Fill up the bowl, upon my soul,
Your trouble you'll forget, sir,
If it takes more, fill twenty more,
'Till you have drowned regret, sir.



THAT BASINGSTOKE LOOK (Act 1, Sc. 1)



LUCREZIA : "How many crows may nest in a grocer's jerkin?"
Fool : "A full dozen at cock-crow, and something less under the dog-star, by reason of the dew, which lies heavy on men taken by the scurvy."

It could be Shakespeare. It's actually Max Beerbohm, producing with ease the kind of crack which once made a Globe Theatre audience burst its trunkhose with the same Niagara-like roar one hears today from a TV audience bowled over by something nearly as funny. And on the whole I think a highbrow type recently averring that Shakespeare's comedy gag-man should have been drowned at birth was being a trifle peevish (having an unhappy home life, they often are). He should be made to prove his case. Otherwise the yoke, as the Swedish accountant said laughingly when the little actress got the stockbroker with a well-aimed egg, is on him.

I invite you to transfer your glassy gaze from the joke to the joker, in this particular case the unknown hack who supplied the gags for Shakespeare's Fools. I see a script conference at the Globe. Present are William Shakespeare, playwright, Robert Armin, his leading comedian, Burbage, lessee and manager, his secretary and the gag-man, reading his latest. Shakespeare is doodling with a bored expression. Burbage's angry little red eyes are fixed on the gag-man. Armin is asleep. Having read out the joke above quoted, or something like it, the gag-man comes to a stop. Long pause.

Burbage (at length): Bob (*Shoves Armin, who wakes up*). Who was that lady I saw you with last night?

Armin (a trifle dazed): Who was that lady you saw me with last night?

Burbage: Yes, who was that lady I saw you with last night?

Armin (like a flash): That wasn't no lady, that was my wife.

Burbage (to gag-man): See? (*Points to door, exit gag-man*).

Shakespeare meanwhile continues doodling with a bored expression. He despises these redfaced yahoos and their low-grade humour. "I think," he says at length, "I like the one about the scurvy crows. In fact I want it. It's new. It's snappy. It's got something. I think that chap's good." An hour later, after a heated argument, the gag-man is recalled. Burbage says : "You've got a gag there something about why does a chicken when it spins across the road or something. I'll buy that one." So he buys it and Armin makes it (with few alterations) an exit-line in *Twelfth Night* or *As You Like It*, and it falls flat, and the gag-man is fired, takes to drink, sinks lower and lower, and ends, God help him, in journalism.

You perceive the drift of all this? It illustrates the comic artist's grievance down the ages. Never do they want his best work, his pride, his ewe-lamb, his poppet, his darling, the fruit of anxious toil, the joke into which he has poured his heart's-blood. Always the inferior brand, the fillup, the throwcut, the makeweight, the afterthought. From the particoloured clown shaking his bells under a Norman baron's nose down to some shirtsleeved serf penned in a glass cage in a Hollywood studio I hear the same old cry, and from this grievance has sprung the legend that chaps who live on and by jokes are miserable moping devils in private life. They are, of course, nothing of the sort. I have met many. Coping with the louts they have to cope with has made them defiant, cynical, tough, and merry.

Apart from consigning them all to hell they bear their tyrants no ill will at all.

Nor can women break a jester's heart, as a vain people believes. The legend of the Heartbroken Clown, so far as I can discover, is of nineteenth-century literary origin. I fancy the Goncourts began it. It was vastly developed by the *Pagliacci* nonsense, Gilbert gave it new life in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, and it is a total myth, as I realized finally on once meeting the brothers Fratellini of the Cirque d'Hiver.

Nothing on earth could make those three eminent clowns cry, it occurred to me, but a three-point drop in Standard Oil.

D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS offers some shrewd speculations upon the Pagliacci-complex, with special reference to the Hampshire touchstone of British humour which has broken the hearts of so many comedians

Here you pipe up and say, but are jesters never for it? Well, the only true case I know concerns the celebrated Will Somers, Court Fool to Henry VIII and his boon-companion likewise, a cross in looks between Dan Leno and Gordon Harker, and a public idol. The only known occasion on which Will Somers failed to please Henry VIII occurred about a year after Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn, when Somers described La Boleyn in full Court in a five-letter Scriptural word and her offspring in a word of seven; after which this too-accurate clown had to fly for his life, having uttered a truism backed alike by Canon and Civil Law.

From Will Somers, a credit to the profession, it is a sad drop to that maudlin old drip in *Pagliacci* weeping to the public about his domestic troubles. Even his worst cracks would not get across after that, I fear—in fact I should not be surprised if public resentment with a comedian of this type would set in immediately he wiped his eyes and began the evening's wisecracks.

"Not so good."

"What's that?"

"I was just saying to Mrs. Watson—this comic, he's not so good."

"That's right, my Mum thinks he's terrible."

"What's that, Amy?"

"This comic—Auntie and Mr. Parkin think he's not so good."

"That's right. Got a broken heart or something."

"Well, he's not so good. I mean he's not funny."

"That's right."

Thus swiftly can a reputation die, and far away, I guess, some dear old whitehaired booking-agent would soon be bowing his head in grief and bitterness. That (something) so-and-so and his (something) trouble-and-strife! Hey, Joe, gimme Charley. Hey, Charley, cancel Basingstoke.

I HAVE mentioned Basingstoke. I did not do so lightly. It is a test-town for the Arts, constantly on the lips of Press magnates and probably all other entertainment-tycoons. "It hasn't only got to go down with me, it's got to go down with a cabman's wife in Basingstoke!" the cry is traditional. The Cabman's Wife of Basingstoke looms over those big boys' silken pillows like a thundercloud. In the opinion (to quote a late regretted master again) of Max Beerbohm, delivered one golden day during luncheon on the roof of the Villino Chiaro overlooking the infinite Mediterranean blue, she terrifies them because she is far more difficult to please than they, being able to read and write. This lends her eyes a stonily-contemptuous expression which I have myself observed, on passing through Basingstoke (pop. 18,170), to be common to the locals at large. You can probably pick them out in a B.B.C. stooge-audience, tight-lipped and aloof while the rest are falling on the floor at the cheer-leader's signal.

Hence the fact that most of our contemporary comic boys on the Press suffer from what might be called a Basingstoke angst, or anxiety-neurosis. A Harley Street psychiatrist told me lately that this may expand to such dimensions that the patient firmly believes that all the wittiest letters in the *New Statesman* come from cabmen's wives in Basingstoke (which is quite absurd, since barely seventy-five per cent do). This is such a very real burden that at times the whole world seems, to these chaps, to take on the Basingstoke Look.

I think this sufficiently answers the highbrow who sneers at Shakespeare's gag-man. He evidently thinks joke-production is as easy as producing essays on, say, Shelley's use of the jussive-subjunctive in his late-middle period, which is probably connected (though nobody ever mentions it) with Shelley's habit of coming down to luncheon in the nude. For this simple joke he certainly got the Basingstoke Look from Mary Godwin, who agreed with the Cabman's Wife. Maybe she was one. Ever thought of that? Coool!





A magnificent example of a miniature garden planted in a stone trough, a flowery microcosm of endless interest through the winter months

LIVING GARLANDS FOR YULETIDE

ANNE ASHBERRY describes how the miniature likeness of a summer landscape can brighten the winter days, and add a new emphasis to the promise of Christmas

Twelve years old now, this little garden, 16 in. by 9 in., is still full of vigorous life



A TRUE garden in miniature planted with slow-growing trees and a variety of tiny perennials can be interesting and beautiful throughout the year, but it is perhaps especially attractive in the winter, when so much in a full-scale garden is dormant. The little trees are always decorative, but their delightful contours and rich colours of varying shades of green, bronze, gold and even silver, make them seem more so in winter.

Many of these plants, usually known as alpine, have come originally from the mountainous parts of the world, where no tall plants could withstand such exposed conditions. Amongst them are minute editions of plants which grow in most English gardens, irises, daffodils, dianthus and violets, and it is their familiar shape and colour in such a diminutive size which charms most people.

Some of the loveliest alpine come into flower in the winter. Usually, the first are the enchanting *narcissus minima*, the perfect trumpet daffodil which comes from the mountains of Spain. Then, the Kabschia group of saxifrage with their neat cushions of silver-grey foliage and delicate flowers of white, yellow and different shades of pink. These sometimes come into bloom late in December, especially if sheltered from excessive rain or fog. After the saxifrages come the gay little drabas, bright green cushions with small yellow flowers on hairlike stems. Then *primula Clarkii*, a little gem from the Himalayas with rounded leaves and brilliant pink flowers. *Primula Scotica*, one of the most beautiful of this genus, is a native of the Highlands, with a rosette of small grey-green leaves and a cluster of minute flowers of vivid purple, on one-inch stems. This fascinating little plant sometimes flowers again in the summer. *Soldanella alpina*, a treasure from the Swiss Alps, is happy in a shady position and once established will enchant you with its nodding fringed bells of rosy lilac.

FLOWERING shrubs add colour and fragrance; *jasminum Parkeri* from the Himalayas has delicate starry flowers of soft yellow, delightfully scented. *Andromeda polifolia compacta*, with grey-green foliage, bears pale pink bell flowers in the spring. The dwarf rhododendrons are attractive for their neat habit and foliage, as well as their bright flowers. There are also several varieties of *salix* (willow) with small leaves and minute silver catkins which make them well worth growing, but they must be well pruned as they tend to grow rather vigorously.

Most endearing of all are the miniature roses. The first of these was discovered in Switzerland about forty years ago. Since then many varieties of pink, red and white have been bred in Holland. They are all charming, and though they vary from 2 to 6 in. in overall height, each is perfectly proportioned in leaf,



A formal garden (above) with dwarf cypresses offers a piquant contrast with a cottage garden (right) complete with miniature well and geese!



bud and flower, perfect examples of the charm of the miniature.

One of the smallest is *Rosa roulettii*, a sturdy little bush about 2 in. high, which bears a succession of deep pink double flowers from April or May until the end of the year. *Rosa Sweet Fairy* has pale pink flowers and a very lovely perfume. *Rosa Pixie* is white, faintly flushed with pink, in the cooler weather. *Rosa Cinderella* is another white, slightly sturdier in habit. *Rosa Maid Marion* is a brilliant double red; *Rosa Peon* a deep crimson with a white centre, whilst *Rosa Elf* is the deepest rich red, a most lovely colour, especially in bud, when it is almost black. Two new varieties of red roses are extremely small; *Rosa Tiny Tot* is a minute bush with scarlet flowers, whilst *Rosa Peter Pan*, a most engaging little plant, has microscopic blooms of bright red with a deeper red vein in the centre of each petal.

THESE, only a few of the many different little roses which are now grown in this country, with their varied and individual charms make planning a rose garden in miniature a most fascinating project. Generally they keep their foliage and continue to flower until quite late in the year, but even when not in flower, and after they have lost their foliage, these roses are attractive, for almost immediately they put forth their minute leaf buds which are often a vivid red.

Rosa roulettii is the most generous of them all and is often in bloom at Christmastime. One of the most enchanting things I have seen was the sun shining on one of my miniature gardens which had been completely submerged under about 6 in. of snow. Gradually the contours of the trees were revealed and then a minute hole appeared in the flat surface below, and through this came the pink tip of a rose bud. As the snow slowly melted until the hole was about the size of a penny, one could see into a fairy cave where the entire rose bush, only 2 in. high, with every leaf shining and minute buds just opening, glowing with health, was as fresh and lovely as on a June day. The beauty of the little plant was enhanced by the sparkling snow and the contrasting darkness beneath.

Generally speaking the garden should be out of doors all the year round, but to ensure some early blooms it could, in bad weather, be sheltered in a cool greenhouse or a frame. With this

protection one can be fairly sure of having some of the plants in flower at Christmastime; almost certainly some of the roses and the pretty little Australian violet, *v. hederacea* which bears white flowers with purple markings.

There is a wide range of dwarf conifers which varies in shape and habit, from the slender, erect *juniperus communis compressa* to the weeping *juniperus Coxii*, and the very lovely *chamaecyparis obtusa nana* with its dense little fan-shaped branchlets and gnarled, venerable trunk. There are other delightful little trees, including *picea abies pygmaea*, of charming shape and colour, whilst *cedrus libani Comte de Dijon* is an exquisitely beautiful miniature Cedar of Lebanon.

Another dwarf cypress, *chamaecyparis andleyensis leptoclada*, is a symmetrical pyramid of delicate larch-like foliage which makes a quite enchanting little Christmas tree, and can be decorated with small pieces of jewellery and beads. It is, of course, far too precious to be kept indoors all the time, but for Christmas week it will repay the extra care required to decorate it; pearls and beads are very effective.

Many would-be gardeners, who are thwarted by lack of time to cope with even a modest full-scale garden, could satisfy the desire to own and cultivate plants by creating a miniature landscape offering continuous pleasure.

MINIATURE gardens appeal to all ages from very small children to elderly people, especially those who have been keen gardeners but cannot now do much active work. To them, and to many invalids, such a garden brings all the happiness of real gardening—planning, planting, weeding and generally tending the plants without undue fatigue. For the plants to be seen in detail and enjoyed the garden should be at least two feet from the ground and could be on a window ledge, or a pedestal. A charming old lady of eighty-three once told me that she had loved gardening for over sixty years, but now the time had come to do so at a higher level, and she was enjoying a trough garden on a pedestal.

Plants from diverse parts of the world as Africa, India, Australia, China, America or the European Alps, growing happily in one small garden, might well be a symbol of that peace and goodwill which is the message of Christmas.





ALIEN IN THE FESTIVE CORN

GEORGE MIKES gives guidance to the innocent in Britain, caught up in the gay, time-honoured and remorseless turmoil



IF you, my dear fellow-European, are contemplating a visit to England at Christmastime, pray take my good advice: don't.

You have noticed that I call you "European." Europeans used to be called foreigners—plus an adjective—before England needed foreign currency as badly as she does now. At one time—when her gold reserves were at their lowest ebb—we were called "distinguished visitors." Luckily, those dreadful times are now over and we are "Europeans" once again. According to Britain's most distinguished economic prophets there is no likelihood of our becoming foreigners again in the foreseeable future.

But let us return to Christmas; or rather let us stay at home, in our respective countries. "Why?"—you may ask in your utter ignorance. "Why? What's wrong with the English Christmas?" I am afraid it would take a folio of two thousand pages to give a detailed answer to that question; but I shall try to give you a brief summary of its more terrible features.

The first question is: WHEN IS CHRISTMAS? In other countries Christmas lasts two days; in England it begins in September with the "POST EARLY FOR TOBAGO" and the "LAST PARCEL-POST TO TRISTAN DA CUNHA" placards. And it ends in the second half of February, by which date the last Christmas presents have been exchanged and even the weakest stomachs and nerves restored to more or less normal.

WHAT are the outstanding menaces of the English Christmas? I should put them in this order:

First, CHRISTMAS CARDS. I have nothing against a normal number of Christmas cards. I like receiving them and positively enjoy sending the first three hundred. Although I get gradually less and less enthusiastic after that figure, I still remain tolerant and understanding for a while. After all, I say to myself, the essence of modern Christmas seems to be to keep the Post Office and shopkeepers happy and prosperous—so why complain? What if local letters arrive after a delay of four days? What if you have to queue three-quarters of an hour for a book of stamps? The main thing is that several hundred million Christmas cards should be printed, bought, sold, written, stamped, dispatched and delivered by people who—I am sure—mean it kindly.

About ten per cent of my Christmas cards come from people



whom I see rarely, with whom I cannot keep a permanent contact but who still like to remind me of their existence—in other words from the sort of people for whose sake Christmas cards were originally invented and whose act of sending a card really makes sense. The rest come either from people whom I meet three times a day or else from people whom I have long ago forgotten or never met; these latter usually sign their cards simply “Hugh” or “Peggy” or just “T.P.” or “F.”

Second, GIFTS. These are a more serious nuisance. People who send you gifts are not really wicked although there must be a nasty and revengeful streak in some of them. The rest are simply crazy. An irresistible urge of Christmas-fever—known scientifically as Christmasitis—seizes them and they run amok in shops, buy useless things for people who will be grieved to receive them, wrap them up in coloured paper, tie golden cord around them, attach labels with Christmas bells and little angels and dispatch them mercilessly.

I USED to be terrified of last-minute gifts—I mean gifts arriving a short time before the shops close down for the Christmas holiday—and for years I used to dash down to the nearby stores to buy at outrageous prices whatever was unsold. I have now solved the problem of last-minute gifts and can retaliate fittingly. There exists a neat-looking but very cheap tricycle (only thirty shillings) a dozen of which I regularly purchase before Christmas. Whoever sends me a gift on December 23 or 24 gets a tricycle in return. I thought of this idea three years ago and it has worked wonderfully ever since. It was only my father-in-law's eighty-three year old aunt in Liverpool (an ignorant foreigner—I mean European—herself) who, on receiving my modest little gift, wrote back to inquire whether I had gone mad. I replied, a little coolly, that I had not gone mad, I had only become anglicized. There is, after all, a difference between the two.

Third, FOOD. England is a wonderful country and I am one of her greatest lovers and admirers. Tolerance, Magna Charta, Habeas Corpus, civilized manners and all that sort of thing; but English food—let us admit in manly fashion—is all a mistake. But no other season is quite so hard on the unsuspecting visitor and resident European as Christmas. At Christmastime (a) you have too much food which makes it worse; (b) you have all sorts of

peculiar dishes such as Christmas pudding with its accessories.

And then there is turkey. You eat turkey for lunch, for dinner, for breakfast; a little bit of turkey for tea and before going to bed. You see turkey, you hear turkey, you dream turkey but—as our American brethren would put it—you do not talk turkey any more.

For long, long years turkey was consumed only and exclusively at Christmastime. I am not a rich man myself and shall never become one. But I made a man very rich indeed with one single piece of advice I gave him ten years ago. He had a poultry farm and I asked him: “Why don't you sell turkeys all the year round?” I had to repeat the question three times because he was sure he had got it wrong. He explained with a supercilious smile that in England no one would dream of buying turkey before December 20 or after December 25. Besides, outside these dates he would have to charge normal prices and not seven times the turkey's value—so what would be the point? Today he sells turkey all the year round, he has made a fortune on it and—as a token of his undying gratitude—he does not send me one at Christmas, which is jolly decent of him.

FOURTH, PARTIES. English cocktail parties have served as an easy target for humorists, snobs and many others. I always found these parties a most civilized institution for a number of reasons. But Christmas parties are a sad exception. There is something incredibly gloomy in these Christmas parties, verging on the tragic. Life is becoming more and more uniform in any case, and Christmas is the worst time of all. People send the same Christmas cards to each other, the same gifts, eat the same food, drink the same drinks, meet the same people at parties which run to the same patterns, repeat the same remarks and observations, tell the same jokes, kiss the same kisses under the same mistletoe.

Do you see then, at last, what is so wrong with the English Christmas? It ruins you financially; excessive eating and drinking destroys your health for months; and the strain of gruelling monotony reduces you to a nervous wreck. Otherwise it is, of course, a touchingly charming holiday. Especially for the kids.

There is nothing new in all this. Everybody in England goes on grumbling about Christmas and swearing secret oaths to himself that next year he will revolt against it. But we are all cowards and weaklings, myself included. We meekly submit to the reign of terror exercised by shopkeepers, Postmasters-General, children and neighbours. Others keep to the beaten path so we have to, also.

Others may admire Robin Hood, the Black Prince or Cyril Washbrook; my own hero will be the Man, that Brave and Glorious Creature, who will draw his sword and smash our Christmas habits and conventions to smithereens. But until then, stay away from England at Christmastime, my dear fellow-European: STAY AWAY FROM ENGLAND!





For the Tired
Business Man:
"The Greek
Slave" (left), a
revolving statue
from the Great
Exhibition, 1851



For the Social
Climber: a large
Victorian parure
(right) with the
flowers sus-
pended on wires

PRESENTS WITHOUT PRICE

JAMES LAVER selects from the fabulous treasures of the Victoria and Albert Museum, where he is a Keeper, gifts which would be appropriate for some of the graceful and disgraceful types of our time

For the tired business man

THERE were tired business men even in the Victorian era, and presumably they were able to refresh themselves in the traditional way. One of the chief successes of the Great Exhibition of 1851 was a statue by the American sculptor Hiram Powers. It was called "The Greek Slave." A contemporary critic explained that "during the early Greek revolutions, the captives were exposed for sale in the Turkish bazaar, under the name of 'slaves.' The artist has delineated a young girl, deprived of her clothing, standing before the licentious gaze of a wealthy Eastern barbarian. Her face expresses shame and disgust at her ignominious position, while about her lip hovers that contemptuous scorn which a woman can so well show for her unmanly oppressor." Fine words, but the sad truth is that the Victorians themselves had a complex about captive women deprived of their clothing. There were several of them in the Great Exhibition but none could rival the attraction of Hiram Powers's *chef d'oeuvre*.

For the social climber

AT all periods it has been the custom of those who wished to display their wealth to load themselves and their wives and mistresses with jewels. Some of the newly rich gentlemen at the Court of the first Elizabeth wore doublets sewn all over with pearls and precious stones. The diamond only really comes into its own a century later when the Dutch discovered the proper way of cutting it in order to give out its maximum brilliance.

The Victorian piece here reproduced was intended to be worn as a corsage ornament. It must have needed a very solid boned bodice to support it. Most modern dresses would simply tear under the weight. The flowers and leaves are worked out with exquisite elaboration; and it was a nice touch to mount the flowers on wires so that they quivered and trembled with every movement of the wearer, the diamonds darting their rays of light across the ballroom in the early days of Victoria's reign.

For the cosh boy

THE cosh is no new invention: in fact it probably has a longer history than any other weapon of offence. A stone tied with thongs to the end of a stick must have reinforced many an argument of Primitive Man. The sword replaced it as being a more effective weapon, but during the Middle Ages



For the Cosh Boy: a
Persian mace of
damascened steel.
It was made in the
seventeenth century

the cosh—or the mace, as it was then called, came back again, and for a very curious reason. Fighting bishops—and there were plenty of them; one of the most celebrated, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, fought at the Battle of Hastings—objected to using the sword, because their sacred calling forbade them to shed blood. They had no objection however to cracking the skulls of their enemies with a mace. It was a nice theological point, but it seems to have satisfied the conscience of the time.

The weapon here reproduced can have been used with no such Christian intent. It is not a Christian weapon at all, having been made in Persia in the seventeenth century. It is a handsome piece of forged steel damascened with gold, and must have belonged to some very aristocratic warrior. The Persians continued to fight in what is called Saracenic armour until well into the age of firearms. In fact there was very little difference between their accoutrement and that of the Saracenic warriors under Saladin who fought with King Richard I. The modern exponent of the cosh prefers something more easily hidden—and less artistic.

For a maiden aunt

MOST of us were familiar when young with what was still called the “front parlour”; a sacred room, seldom used, into which children were not encouraged to venture. Their presence indeed was hardly safe amid such a profusion of breakable knick-knacks. In particular there were two large vases which stood one at each end of the chimney-piece, and these were usually horrible examples of the Victorian ornamental vase. Such vases were the illegitimate descendants of the far finer and more delicate objects which had graced the salons of the French aristocrats in the second half of the eighteenth century. We show here not the Victorian horrors (although they too are beginning to creep back into favour) but some superb examples of real Sèvres.

The ceramic wares of the Western World were rather crude things until the end of the seventeenth century; what fine pots there were had been imported from China where the art of making porcelain was carefully guarded. But by the early years of the eighteenth century the secret was out and porcelain manufacture sprung into existence in every country. England had its Chelsea and Germany its Meissen and Nymphenberg; France had its Sèvres, the products of which soon reached a peak of elegance and taste. A factory was first established at Vincennes in 1745, but was moved to Sèvres, some two and a half miles from Paris, in 1796. It was acquired by the state in 1759. Its “blue enamel” (specimens of which are here shown) was particularly admired. The elegance of form, the beauty of colour, and the delicacy of the pictures painted on the porcelain, some of them by the best artists of the day, made the word Sèvres a hall-mark of quality. Sèvres porcelain was one of the most typical products of that age of aristocratic refinement which came to an end with the French Revolution.



For a modern milkmaid

MILKMAIDS are now scientifically trained young women in hygienic white coats and (for all I know) rubber gloves. Not for them the ample skirts and tucked-up kirtles of their predecessors tripping out into the flower-strewn meadows with a bucket in one hand and a three-legged stool in the other. Perhaps the “Nobody asked you, sir, she said” technique is still practised, but otherwise hardly anything remains.

Of course no *real* milkmaid ever wore such garments as we have chosen for her modern counterpart. This beautiful yellow silk robe with sack back, petticoat and stomacher, this straw hat and cloak of figured satin lined with silk, this muslin cap topped with a laced straw hat, these lace sleeve ruffles—all this is the outfit of the country lady of about 1760 who liked to play at being a milkmaid and to pretend that the “flowery meads” were more to her taste than “the purlieu of the Court.” For in the second half of the eighteenth century it was the fashion to adore country pursuits, to speak of Nature with reverence, and even to read the works of that dangerous Swiss Jean-Jacques Rousseau who was in



[Continued overleaf]



[Continued from page 45]

favour of the "Natural Man" and even of the "Noble Savage." Playing at being a milkmaid was quite a modish pursuit.

Even Kings and Queens took up the rural life. Our own George II was proud of being called the Farmer King. Even the artificial French were seized with a similar impulse and Marie-Antoinette even had a cottage built in the grounds of the King's palace, and pretended to make hay and milk cows. All this may seem very remote to our modern milkmaid but perhaps she will accept the dress, not as a working-day outfit, but for a party frock.

For a man with a thirst

MEN still have thirsts but it is doubtful if anyone nowadays indulges in such deep potations as seemed natural to ages more robust. The subjects of the first Elizabeth had a reputation throughout Europe. We have Iago's word for it (if Iago's word can be trusted) in Shakespeare's *Othello*:

Iago: In England they are most potent in potting. Your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander—Drink ho!—are nothing to your English.

Cassio: Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

Iago: Why, he drinks you with facility your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit ere the next pottle can be filled.

In Elizabethan England a pottle was supposed to contain two quarts or half a gallon. The vessel here reproduced seems larger and is of German origin. The tiny figures of soldiers—or, rather, of fine gentlemen with swords at their sides, for military uniforms had hardly yet been invented—are, with their high ruffs, their peascod doublets and trunk hose, of particular interest to students of Elizabethan costume. They are from a mould by an artist named Jan Emens and are dated 1584. When Shakespeare first came to London he must have met many such among the foreigners who thronged the Royal Exchange. The jug itself was made about 1600 at Raeren or Grenzhäusen in Germany.



Plainer models of the same kind were known in England at this period, and may well have played their part in the libations at the Mermaid Tavern.

For a horrid child

ONCE upon a time every schoolchild had heard of Tippoo Sahib but perhaps that sort of thing has now been crowded out of the curriculum. He was certainly a redoubtable warrior and gave us, in the eighteenth century, a great deal of trouble in our attempt to extend our dominions in India. He defeated one of our generals in 1782 and a few years later provoked the Second Mysore War. Defeated by General Cornwallis in 1791 he was forced to cede half of his dominion. He renewed the war in 1799 and was killed at the storming of Seringapatam. One of the most brilliant young officers on this occasion was the man who was later to be known as the Duke of Wellington.

Tippoo Sahib had no great reason to love the British and he amused himself by watching a mechanical tiger, so constructed that, with many growls, it tore the body of a British soldier lying prostrate beneath its paws. Such a toy must have provoked great amusement at Tippoo's court, but, as it turned out, the final smile was not on the face of the tiger. The beast is very ingeniously constructed and would appeal to any modern child with a mechanical bent and a taste for horror comics. According to the shocked accounts of educationists that would include nearly all modern children. All boys, perhaps; surely a nice little girl would prefer a toy like the mechanical nightingale in the story of Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp.

For a favourite Dean

AHUNDRED years ago, of course, this would have been a most unsuitable present for any Dean, although Dr. Pusey at Oxford might have welcomed it. Today the Anglican Church has become sufficiently "ritualistic," as our ancestors would say, to treasure such examples of medieval vestments as have survived. This is a particularly beautiful and particularly early specimen of a cope. It is called the Syon Cope, having come from the Convent of Syon, near Isleworth. It was made in the early fourteenth century; it is of gold and silk embroidery on linen and represents scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin, with figures of St. Michael, the Apostles, and seraphim. The coats of arms along the top are slightly later, dating from about the middle of the fourteenth century. English work—*opus Anglicanum* as it was called—was much prized at this period, not only in England but all over Europe. It is the result of a unique combination of the finest craftsmanship with intense religious and artistic feeling. Such specimens as have

survived are now extremely costly. A cope of this kind was recently sold for more than £30,000.





For the jazz fiend

IT is astonishing how long it took the pianoforte to come into existence. The instrument shown in the illustration is a harpsichord, and the harpsichord is *not* a piano; it is constructed on an entirely different principle. It is descended not, like the piano, from the dulcimer, but from the medieval psaltery. In other words, it operates by a plucked string instead of a hammered string.

These may seem to be technical details of interest only to musical historians, but the fact remains that these two instruments, the harpsichord and the pianoforte, are only similar in their cases, which tend to be of the same shape.

The instrument we illustrate is a harpsichord and a very important one. It was made by the famous Parisian harpsichord maker Pascal Taskin. His instruments were in general on a smaller scale than those in vogue in England. They had ebony naturals and ivory sharps, and the ornament of the case was "in the Chinese (or the Japanese) taste." The instrument shown was made in 1786 and might be called the last of the harpsichords. The authorities here are able to give an exact date, for we know that in England the King's Birthday Ode was accompanied by the harpsichord until June 4, 1795, when a grand piano was substituted, a harpsichord having been used at the rehearsal. This, then, was the actual moment of the changeover.

Henceforward the pianoforte was to drive all its rivals out of the field. Its advantage was obvious. To use technical terms all instruments constructed on the plectrum principle—that is, instruments in which the strings are *plucked*—"were incapable of dynamic modification of tone by difference of touch." The pianoforte *was* capable of this modification, for the strings can be *hit* either hard or gently as the player wishes. It is therefore by malice aforethought that we offer to the jazz fiend this splendid example of the harpsichord. Nothing could lend itself less to the effects of jazz than the delicate ghostly sound of its plucked strings.



For the little flat

MOST of us nowadays live in little flats. The decoration is sometimes admirable in its simplicity, but it is only when we visit the great country houses which have remained in private possession that we are able to realize the magnificence of English architecture and interior decoration in the second half of the eighteenth century. There was at that time something which could be called a typical English style, like nothing else to be seen in Europe at that period; and the most successful exponent of that style, if not its originator, was the Scotsman Robert Adam.

All his brothers were eminent but Robert surpassed them all. Basing himself on classical motifs he evolved a light, airy and elegant style which became the rage. Every nobleman or rich person who wished to have his house rebuilt or redecorated in the seventeen-eighties or seventeen-nineties thought it necessary to call in the Brothers Adam.

Among these was the Duke of Northumberland, the owner of Northumberland House which stood at the west end of the Strand. There had been a mansion there from very early days, but an entirely new house was built in the reign of James I and enlarged, some years later, by no less a person than Inigo Jones. Part of the interior was redecorated at the end of the eighteenth century, the work being entrusted to Robert Adam. He departed from his usual austere style so far as to make the background of the decoration in gilded lead, wood and composition, of mirror and glass, painted at the back and with the addition of gold foil to represent red and green porphyry. The mansion was demolished in the early part of 1874, and Northumberland Avenue constructed on the site of the house and garden. A small part of the Adam decoration was preserved and it is this which has now found its way into the Victoria and Albert Museum. Perhaps, since great houses are becoming increasingly rare, that is the only place where such splendid decorations, so evocative of past architectural glory, can now be housed.



Horrockses

Gift Towels



"Well, what shall we do now?"

JOHN REMINGTON READ speculates upon the decline of party games, with a note of desperation at the horrid gap they leave

"THEY don't seem to play games as we used to," said my old friend sadly, peering over the top of his glasses—all three of them, for a delicious Niersteiner hovered within striking distance of his lips and nostrils. "I've been a progressive all my life, but even I can't choke back the cry: Those were the days! Look at us all sitting here—wouldn't it be fun if somebody gave out pencils and paper and we all had a good round game!"

At the very thought of it his eyes brightened, his nostrils flared. Had there been any trumpets he would have cried Ha! Ha! among them. To the completion of a limerick or the spelling of ichthyophagous he would have brought the zest which enlivened his championship of many humane projects. But there were no trumpets, no pencils, no paper, no games; the younger generation sat around mumbling gently, and he was plainly depressed by the spectacle.

PERHAPS he was unlucky; I know of one young set which relies heavily upon this sort of home-made entertainment. But in general I rather feel that they are out of favour except among the very young indeed—and who can say whether they are really enjoying themselves? Modern children have such appallingly good manners that one hardly knows where one is.

In any case, party games should not be allowed to slide lightly into oblivion; they have an important part to play in solving, or at least mitigating, the greatest of all human problems. You raise an eyebrow? But consider for a moment what the greatest of all human problems actually is—at least for those of us who by luck or judgment manage to live at least a little above the level of the beasts. The threat of annihilation by some monstrous bomb? Of course not; you know as well as I that we never give it a thought, beyond an occasional headshake over the breakfast-table. The pressure of guilt caused by the knowledge of millions less fortunate than ourselves? Alas, no; in all honesty now, doesn't an



occasional donation here and there take care of our consciences in that respect? The hideous prospect, perhaps, of finding the money for next term's school bills? No, not really; not even that. The greatest of all human problems is, quite simply, the ever-urgent problem of staving off boredom.

The saddest words of tongue or pen are not, as is often suggested, "What might have been," but the infinitely more pitiful postscript to folly, "It seemed all right at the time." And the anguish of simple boredom can make almost anything—from spillikins to seduction and suicide—seem all right at the time. All human beings, indeed all animals (and for all I know all fish) are very easily bored: "Towser, stop scratching at the door. . . Darling, why don't you take him for a walk, he's longing to go out?" "Where to?" "Well, down the lane to the church and back by the green." "I've been there.") Even those beetle-browed cave-dwelling ancestors of ours, once the family mammoth was safely killed and cut up, were so desperate for something to do that they took to dragging their wives round the cave by their hair. Simple fun, no doubt; the first, and by no means the worst, of party games. . . .



SINCE then, of course, games of all sorts, the true saviours of our sanity have developed astoundingly in every possible way—not all of them for the better. Analysis would surely prove that in its groggy progress mankind has spent more time and ingenuity in elaborating its games than in doing anything else beyond feeding itself. Boredom must be kept at bay! I don't concern myself with outdoor sport, now the province of the adulated superman; still less with those sinister, sophisticated indoor pastimes (. . . no, no, no, not *that*) which transform one's jolliest and most intelligent friends into glowering monsters. No good ever came out of a game of bridge, still less Canasta; and I can't even bring myself to mention those other horrid degradations of the human spirit—I mean poker, baccarat and farther stations on the road to Hell. To judge from the looks of those who indulge in these ghastly pursuits they don't even stave off boredom—merely make a ritual cult of it.

But hearty, homely innocent party games, now—even the jolly brainy ones—they are quite another matter. Archimedes very likely made his great discovery while taking a bath after that lively Grecian frolic in which teams of . . . yes, well, no matter; the game's the same, they tell me, to this day. Who knows but that James Watt observed the curious behaviour of the

[Continued overleaf]

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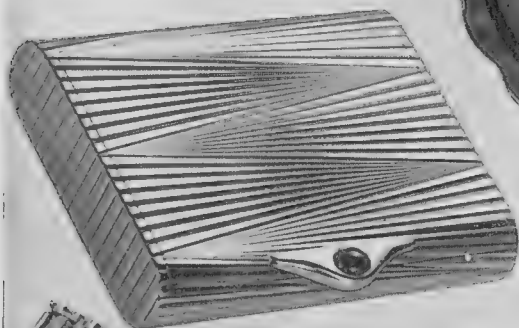


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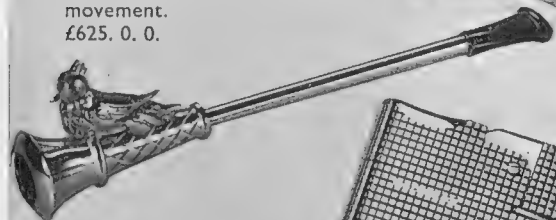
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kettle while making tea to refresh exhausted spelling-bee zealots? And I shouldn't wonder if Sir Alexander Fleming's real moment of inspiration, in the matter of penicillin, came not in a chastely functional laboratory, but while lurking in a damp cellar during a game of hide-and-seek. You too can have great thoughts in unexpected places; or at least ward off a little longer the glum possibility of having any thoughts at all.

See the merry throng gathered in the library/drawing-room/sitting-room/lounge (strike out whichever does not apply). Tibby and Robby are over in the corner; look, can they be holding hands *already*? The babble of conversation dies away as dear Aunt Dora sounds her battle-cry: "What shall we play first?" Eager suggestions flow from every side. "One at a time! One at a time!" cries Uncle Selwyn laughingly as he pours out the Cup. All high jinks and simple-hearted laughter, the evening will whirl away; and so shall we, leaving Aunt Dora to clear up the mess and wonder audibly why she does it.

LET us hope that Uncle Selwyn is not too tired to be tactful; let us hope he does not tell her the truth: that she does it because she likes doing it—it is she, not he, who should have been the territorial major. Yet there are other hostesses, we must admit, who do it rather from a sense of duty—duty to a family tradition, perhaps, or to a daughter denied (lucky girl, did she but know it) a season. As such evenings fade from the social scene these will not repine. No longer will they need to equip themselves with pairs of scissors, balls of string, acres of Bristol board (whatever that is), packs of cards, coins, counters, and twenty miscellaneous objects to be reluctantly memorized. No longer need such a one brood in advance over suitable subjects for quizzes, or rack her untalented brain to dredge up wittily allusive clues for a treasure hunt. No longer need she fret over having told cousin Octavius Henry, when he failed to blow out the candles, that this meant he would be divorced within the year—and then remembered that this was more than likely in sober truth. No longer need she smile and smile as certain couples fail to turn up when the game is over, and suggest, in another moment of inspired tactlessness, a quiet game of consequences. No longer need she accept with grimly concealed gloom the rapid abandonment of a blameless "Up Jenkins!" for the alcoholic complexity of "Cardinal Puff."

SPARE a thought, too, for the reluctant guest. For every one who likes to be sent out again scavenging for a third-class (I mean second-class) ticket from A to B, an English Hymnal and a bosun's pipe, for every one who longs to gesticulate his way to glory as a team-captain in "The Game" (as I understand Dumb-Crambo is now called), for every one who asks nothing better than to impersonate a squirrel with a nut, a rheumatic butler, or a bus with a flat tyre, there must be six who would just as soon walk through fire. And speaking of fire—all that going outside, so draughty; and speaking of teams—all that picking and choosing, so invidious (I'm always left until last).

Besides, why bother? "Living? Our servants can do that for us." And there they are, highly paid servants by the standards of the *Ancien Régime*, but ready at the twist of a knob to do it all for us at any time. Never mind the paper and pencil, empty matchboxes, oranges, eggs, spoons, curtain rods, advertising slogans. Let 'em all come. Sit them down. Switch on; and then the festive evening will fleet away without the slightest effort from anybody—even the laughter is laid on with the jokes—in a light dim enough to be tantalizing but not so dim as to be scandalous.



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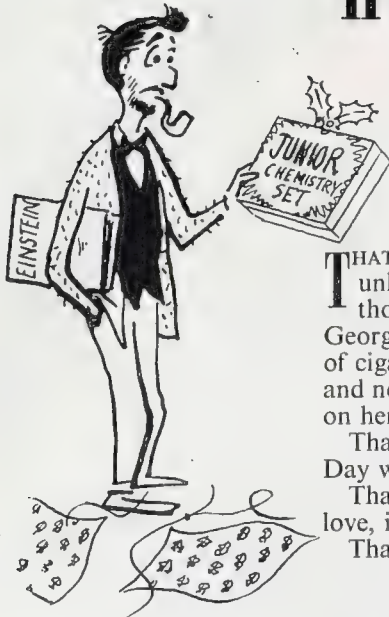


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SA/LSX

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN . . . ?

• by Elspeth Grant •



THAT "young John" is now reading for his B.Sc. and is unlikely to be mad about the junior chemistry set you thought too dangerous to send him five years ago? That George has given up smoking and the usual, easy Christmas carton of cigarettes simply won't do? That Muriel's had her hair dyed green and no longer wears mauve, so the scarf Elfrida sent you can't be fobbed off on her? That indoor plants give Maud hay-fever?

That unless Margaretta's two horrid little boys have identical presents, Boxing Day will be blue murder, and your name for ever mud?

That Caroline is dieting and the good, gooey fudge you make, which she used to love, is strictly "out"? That Sybil is touchy about comfy slippers?

That Sophie Staningley-Bacon, who won all those point-to-points, will expect a horsey Christmas card?



That since poor Julia had to sell her hunter to pay her debts to the bookies, she must in no circumstances be sent a card with a horse on it?

That the beautiful Chinese card you sent Aunt Judith last year was ill-received and you roundly denounced for buying "Communist products"?

That "Here and There a Lusty Trout," which was your last year's last-minute gift to ardent angler Uncle Jos, was icily identified by him as his birthday present to your husband,

who doesn't fish? That Felicity (two) swallowed those beads you gave her?

That those rather awful people you met at Cannes will certainly send you a ghastly, glittering, expensive Christmas card, so you'd better get in first with a modest one? That Mary has a little lamb?

That your sixteen-year-old niece, Anna-Belle, must not be given book tokens as she used the last ones to buy *The Psychology Of Sex*, which shocked her mother who, quite unreasonably, blamed you?

That though handkerchiefs would be eminently suitable for lachrymose Cousin Bertha, they'd only be construed as an implied criticism of her trying habit of bursting into tears at the drop of a hat, and would cause a damp Christmas in the family?

That all alcohol should be locked away on the day of the children's party so that last year's disaster (when Jason "improved" the fruit cup with a whole bottle of gin) is sure not to be repeated?

That Sally has never forgiven Barbara for what she said about her "ill-mannered brats," so on no account must they be asked in for Christmas drinks at the same time?

That though Christmas preparations are a worry and a bore, when the great day comes, it's all so well worth while? Isn't it?





TO WISH YOU
A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A
SMOOTH-RUNNING NEW YEAR
from those who make heavy-duty bearings
for road vehicles, locomotives, helicopters
and other important machines.

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BRIGGS'S PARTY SURPRISE...by Graham

"For once I thought I'd hit on a really original idea..."



Going far for Christmas?

Then you'll want a car that is fast and smooth on the highway, safe and sure in all conditions of road. **The Hillman has super stability, large positive brakes and exceptional all round visibility.**

You'll want leg-stretch room for the whole family and soft, comfortable seating.

The Hillman has 3-dimensional comfort — more leg-room, more head-room, more seating space with wide easy-entry doors, step-down floor and inter-axle seating for a smooth ride.

You'll want to feel proud of your car when you arrive, fresh and exhilarated after your long journey.

Hillman has the 'next-year' look, long, low, elegant lines and beautiful two-tone colour schemes.

You'll want a car with enough room to take *all* the family's luggage in the boot. **The Hillman boot is tremendous, is illuminated, and has a spring-assisted lid.**

And with all that, you still have the comforting thought that it is amazingly economical in every way. Yes, Hillman is a wonderful car for the Christmas journey or any other. Get your dealer to show you one.



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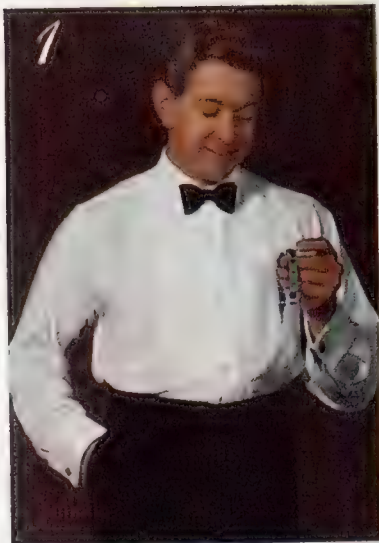
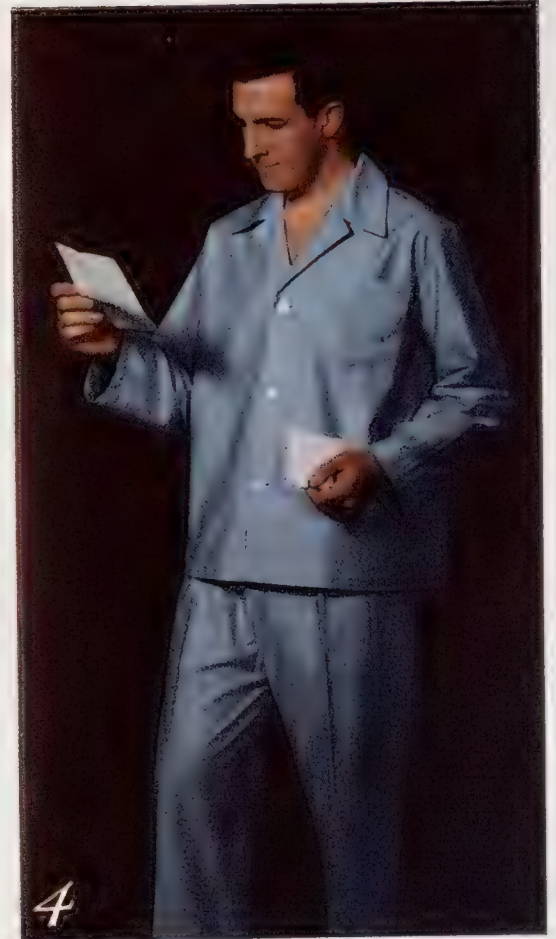


On the second day of Christmas

On the second day of Christmas . . . there'll be no Boxing-Day Blues if they've got Christmas presents like these to sport.

Take a look at this family's haul of Aertex, Merella and Cotella — all gift-worthy and with a bit of Christmas dash about them, plus more than a bit of comfort! And — as my true love said to me — they're very modestly priced and easy to shop for.

You'll usually find Aertex, Merella and Cotella together in the shops, for they're all made by the same famous people.



AERTEX • Merella • Cotella

1 For father An Aertex dress shirt to keep him cucumber-cool however quick the tempo. Collar attached, French marcella front, three-inch cuffs, detachable buttons. 43/9

2 For daughter Cotella blouse in Merella — the new cotton-and-wool fabric, with no-shrink guarantee. White, cream, blue, green or grey, with elastic waist. From 15/9

3 For son Aertex 'Rex' blouse — yellow, green or blue, in three sizes, 12/11. 'Bobby' knicker, elastic-waisted, in six colours and four sizes. From 14/-

4 For big brother He'll be pyjama-perfect in this pair by Cotella. Silky-soft Oxford fabric, plain colours or stripes galore — luxury for 49/6

5 For mother Aertex 'Moirá' long-sleeved blouse in fine cotton, with shirt collar and buttoning cuffs. White with tiny blue, red, yellow or green check. 37/6

6 For the home Aertex all-wool cellular blankets, mothproofed and satin-bound. 72" x 90" each 84/-; 90" x 100" each 118/6. Cellular sheets. White 72" x 100" 80/- pr; 90" x 100" 88/6 pr. Colours 88/6 and 100/-



... Come to think of it, why keep them in the family? What about the boy friend, the girl friend, the honorary uncle, or Albert-next-door?



[Continued from page 17]

Queen Victoria was in the thirty-fourth year of her reign, and the Prince Consort had died nine years before. The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny were long over and forgotten. Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister and was pacifying the Fenians by his Irish legislation. It was the year that the Elementary Education Act was passed, that the Franco-Prussian War broke out, that Dickens died, that Tennyson wrote "The Window" with music by Sullivan, and Gilbert wrote "The Palace Of Truth" without any music at all. It was less than a century ago in time: in spirit, Christmas and otherwise, the age is as remote from us as are the Anglo-Saxons.

1870 The Victorians by now had brought the dinner hour from the Saxon noon to seven or seven thirty in the evening, but they needed the rest of the day to get through a Christmas dinner. The feast had assumed the form of a modern banquet, but the choice of "full dishes" was still bewildering.

Mrs. Beeton suggests a simple Christmas dinner from a mere twenty-four dishes. I would have preferred to attend this one. The menu is from the archives of Mr. Lindsay Ring, the City caterer.

First Service.

Thick Turtle. Clear Turtle.
Fish.

Crimped Cod. (The cod was pierced by a silver knife, when freshly caught, to contract the flesh.) Turbot. Mullet with Italian sauce. Dorset with Hollandaise sauce. Whiting. Cod's head *au gratin*. *Eels à la Genoise*. Fried Whiting, Smelts.

Entrees.

Partridge, sauce Espagnole. Braised Pheasant, sauce Soubise. Braised Leverets, sauce Napolitaine. *Ris de Veau* with spinach. Mutton Cutlets with cucumber.

Removes.

Pork griskins. (Lean loin of pork.) *Côtes de Boeuf à la Jardinière*. Turkey *à la Chipolata*. Roast Turkeys. Boiled Turkeys. Roast and boiled fowls. Ham. Haunches of Mutton. Sirloin of Beef. Saddles of Mutton. Roast snipes, wild duck, woodcocks, pheasants and leverets.

Entremets.

Lobster salad. Scalloped oysters. Game pies. Wine, orange, pineapple jellies. Meringues, canapes, Genoese pastries, Roman cakes. Red currant flans. Mince pies. Christmas pudding. Ice pudding.

Dessert. Ices.

Champagne, burgundy and claret were just beginning to lose their character of "thin, washy stuff" and were taking their place with the sherry, port and brandy preferred by the Early Victorians. And punch had taken the place of posset as the nightcap—if such a feast really needed a lid on it.



SN20

New

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PRÉTEXTE



MY SIN

LANVIN

Parfums

PARIS

[Continued from page 26]

we trim our views."

"Without rancour?"

"Yes, sir."

"Splendid. Yet not shatteringly surprising in the Château de Joie. There's a secret, I suppose. It's not the wine, for there's always been little drinking in the village, the fields, or the château. It can't be solely the air, for other places at this altitude are warmed by the same sun, caressed by the same breezes, scented by the same herbs."

"George has a theory," said Henry.

"It may be duc, sir," said George, "to a herb which, according to my investigations, grows only on your estate. Everyone in the village, and every cook in the château, puts this herb in the soup. I'm pursuing the theory."

"You'll need to gallop," said the ghost. "Still, I'll tell them up there."

"If there's anything in the theory," said Louise, "and you told them *you* ought to investigate, they might let you come more often."

"That's an idea," said the ghost. "I'll ask them now."

"How?" they all inquired.

"I'll talk to them. Haven't I told you how fast we travel? I'll be back in five minutes."

THERE was a swishing sound in the chimney, the ghost disappeared, and in five minutes was back.

"Can't be done," it said. "Nobody has ever had more than an hour a year. They say that if we stayed in some places more than sixty minutes a year, or even encountered certain people in the best of places, we would either find out too much, or be contaminated."

"I stressed the manner of things here, but it was useless. I must leave at midnight. I have, however, obtained a splendid concession. In view of what's going on here, I'm to have an hour with you every Old Year's Night for another ten years. That is, till 1829 inclusive."

"How lovely!" said the sisters, placing their babies on their laps, clapping hands, and clasping the babies again as they were crashing to the floor.

"Congratulations, sir," said the brothers.

"And that," said the ghost, "isn't quite all. If the château's birthrate can be maintained, I'll get a year's extension. Positively the last appearance in 1830. My superiors agree that the world cannot have too many people like us. *Can* the birthrate be maintained?"

"Yes, Papa," cried the sisters—rather quickly, the ghost thought.

"Certainly, sir," said the brothers, with studied hesitation. Henry added: "Nothing easier," and William said they might do even better. "Three babies a year from 1816 to 1830 inclusive makes forty-five. Colville triplets and twins are not unknown in the family history. A few sets would make it fifty for the farewell party."

AND that's how it went. On Old Year's Night, 1830, there was a party at the Château de Joie such as France had never seen. It was held in the great hall, the ghost of the Comte de Joie watching through a hole in the curtain of a long disused sedan chair that stood on the great balcony.

When the party was over, and the ghost had gone for ever, and all the children were asleep, their parents sat talking together. Then Henry, the lame one, said softly: "I wonder where he is now. Inexpressibly high in the heavens, I suppose. Listen, everyone, listen."

They listened, and Henry whispered: "I hear an orchestra, a golden-voiced choir, and bells. Are you all listening?"

"We hear, we hear," they said.

There wasn't an orchestra, a choir, or a peal of bells within miles of the estate.

It's simply that people heard things at the Château de Joie.



Christmas dinner in Centennial Park, Sydney, Australia.

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HERE'S a man of originality—Sir Geoffrey Cory-Wright, Bart., lifetime amateur photographer who has recently made it his profession. You've probably admired the originality of his work in well-known magazines.

Sir Geoffrey is a noted collector of rare and beautiful objects. Here, in his lovely Hertfordshire home, is his collection of rare glass paper-weights, some over 100 years old.

Knowing his individual turn of mind, you won't be surprised when he offers you his very personal choice in cigarettes. Larger than usual, oval in shape though Virginian-flavoured, and rather fuller to the taste: "Passing Clouds"—the cigarettes in that unmistakable pink box.



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Sir Geoffrey Cory-Wright is always happy to talk about his collection of glass paper-weights. "This is the mille fiori design," he says. "The hardest to track down have a single flower or butterfly. Once, you could buy them for a few shillings; now, they can sell for £200!" As he talks you can sense the firm streak of originality in his character. Offer him a cigarette, for instance, and he'll say "rather smoke my own, thanks." Then he'll offer you "Passing Clouds."



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Brief biographies of some contributors



James Laver gained a wide public with his novel *Nymph Errant*, later turned into a musical comedy under C. B. Cochran. As Keeper of the Department of Engraving, Illustrations and Design at the V. and A., he has made a more solid reputation. His published works have ranged from the provocative to the profound with *Taste And Fashion* in 1937, *Titian* in 1950 and *Drama: Its Costume And Decor*. Last year he published *London As It Is*. Less well known are his play translations. Among those he has done are *The Circle Of Chalk* and *La Marquise d'Arcis* (from the German) and *Monsieur Trouhadec* (from the French). He has also adapted *The Swiss Family Robinson*.

Spike Hughes, born 1908, is a composer, critic, broadcaster, author. 1929-1933 ran his own pioneer jazzband. Wrote the first television opera *Cinderella* in 1938. Author of *Opening Bars* and *Second Movement*; the third volume is being written slowly. *The Art Of Coarse Cricket*, *The Art Of Coarse Travel*, *Great Opera Houses*, *Out Of Season* are some more of his works. Shortly will be appearing the first book in a series called *Famous Operas* (Mozart to begin with). He lives in the heart of London and says he is a bad composer because he is not as good as he would like to be. He has a magnificent collection of autograph letters by nineteenth-century operatic composers, including Verdi.



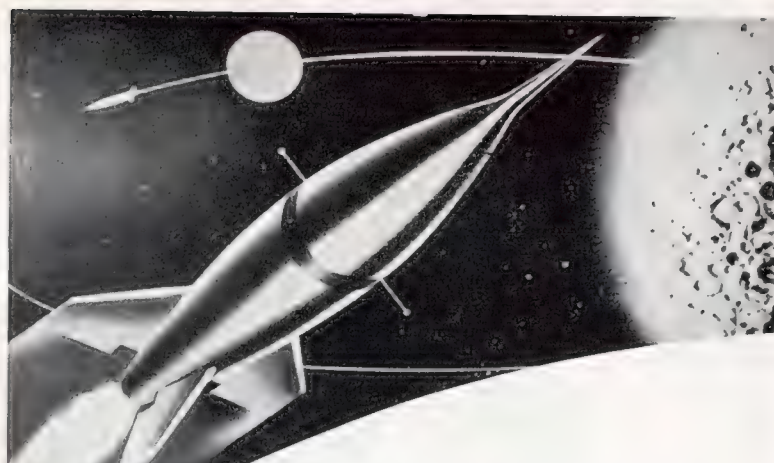
Edmund Blunden, one of the most distinguished of living English poets, is probably best known as the author of *Undertones Of War*. This book was a result of his service in World War One, in which he won the Military Cross. He won the Hawthornden Prize in 1922 and is now Professor of English Literature in Hong Kong. Among his writings are *The Life Of Leigh Hunt*, *Charles Lamb And His Contemporaries* and *Thomas Hardy*. That his interests extend beyond the study his friends know. And his public has benefited by such books as *English Villages* and *Cricket Country*. Not surprisingly he is a member of the Marylebone Cricket Club and is a formidable wicket keeper.



Anne Ashberry, born in London, says: "To begin with I made miniature gardens as a hobby and because the tiny trees and plants gave me so much pleasure I conceived the idea that other flat-dwellers and garden-starved-Londoners like myself would also like such gardens." Starting the venture in Kensington Church Street in 1934, she made the garden for the Queen (then Princess Elizabeth) in 1935. War work took her to Essex and in 1945 she decided to stay in this county and grow her plants there. Books: *Miniature Gardens*, published in 1951. *Miniature Flowers And Vases* published in 1955. She has appeared in several TV programmes, showing her fascinating, small garden.



George Mikes was born in a small town, called Siklós, in Hungary, in 1912. He studied law at Budapest University, but, in the meantime, got a job on a Budapest Sunday paper. During the Czech crisis in 1938 he was sent to London for a fortnight and has remained here ever since, first working as a foreign correspondent, then, during the war, in the Hungarian Service of the B.B.C. He is now a free-lance writer. He has published a number of books including *How To Be An Alien*, *Shakespeare And Myself*, *Down With Everybody!* and this year *Italy For Beginners*. He is a British subject now, lives in London. He is married and has two children: Martin, eleven, and Judy, seven.



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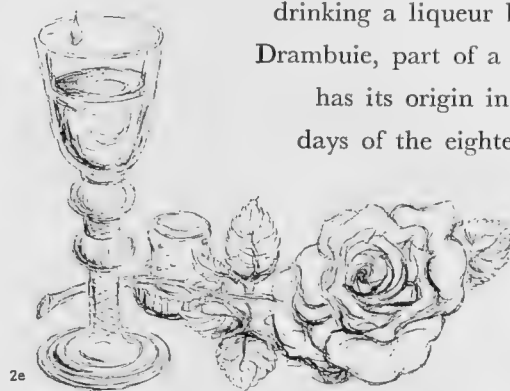
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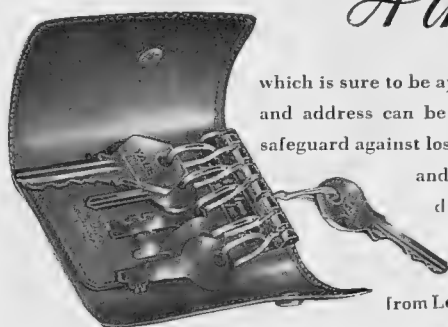


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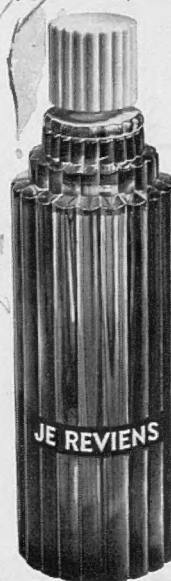
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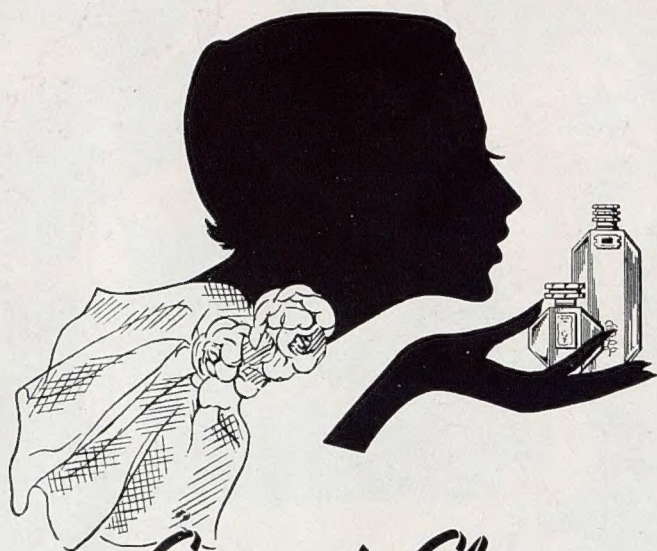


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